AN AMERICAN POLITICIAN.

VOL. II.

AN

AMERICAN POLITICIAN

A Novel

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CHAPTER I.

A COUNCIL of three men sat in certain rooms, in Conduit Street, London. There was nothing whatever about the bachelor's front room overlooking the thoroughfare to suggest secrecy, nor did any one of the three gentlemen who sat in easy chairs, with cigars in their mouths, in any way resemble a conspirator. They were neither masked nor wrapped in cloaks, but wore the ordinary garb of fashionably civilised life. For the sake of clearness and convenience, they can be designated as X, Y, and Z. X was the president on the present occasion, but the office was not held permanently, devolving upon each of the three in succession at each successive meeting.

X was a man sixty years of age, clean-shaved, with smooth iron-grey hair and bushy eyebrows, from beneath which shone a pair of preternaturally bright blue eyes. His face was of a strong, even, healthy red; he was stout, but rather thick and massive than corpulent; his hands were of the square type, with thick straight fingers and large nails, the great blue veins showing strongly through the white skin. He was dressed in black, as though in mourning, and his clothes fitted smoothly over his short heavy figure.

Y was very tall and slight, and it was not easy to make a guess at his age, for his hair was sandy and thick, and his military moustache concealed the lines about his mouth. His forehead was high and broad, and the extreme prominence between his brows made his profile look as though the facial angles were reversed, as in certain busts of Greek philosophers. His fingers were well shaped, but extremely long and thin. He wore the high collar of the period, with a white tie fastened by a pin consisting of a single large pearl, and it was evident that the remainder of his dress was with

him a subject of great attention. Y might be anywhere from forty to fifty years of age.

Z was the eldest of the three, and in some respects the most remarkable in appearance He was well proportioned, except that his head seemed large for his body. His face was perfectly colourless, and his thin hair was white and long and disorderly. A fringe of snowy beard encircled his throat like a scarf, but his lips and cheeks were clean-shaved. The dead waxen whiteness of his face was thrown into startling relief by his great black eyes, in which there was a depth and a fire when he was roused, that contrasted strongly with his aged appearance. His dress was simple in the extreme, and of the darkest colours.

The three sat in their easy chairs round the coal fire. It was high noon in London, and the weather was moderately fine; that is to say, it was possible to read in the room without lighting the gas. X held a telegram in his hand.

"This is a perfectly clear case against us," he remarked in a quiet, business-like manner.

"It has occurred at such an unfortunate

time," said Y, who spoke very slowly and distinctly, with an English accent.

"We shall do it yet," said Z, confidently.

"Gentlemen," said the president, "it will not do to hesitate. There is an individual in this case who will not let the grass grow under his feet. His name is Mr. Patrick Ballymolloy. We all know about him, I expect?"

"I know him very well indeed," said old Z. "It was I who put him in the book." He rose quickly and took a large volume from a shelf near by. It was a sort of ledger, with the letters of the alphabet printed on the cut edges of the leaves.

"I don't believe Y knows him," said the president. "Please read him to us." Z turned over the leaves quickly.

"B—Bally—Ballymolloy—Patrick—Yes," he said, finding the place. "Patrick Ballymolloy. Irish iron man. Boston, Mass. Drinks. Takes money from both sides. Voted generally democratic ticket. P.S. 1882, opposed B. in election for Governor. Iron interest increased. P.S. 1883, owns twenty votes in house. Costs more than he did. That is all," said Z, shutting up the book.

"Quite enough," said the president. "Mr. Patrick Ballymolloy and his twenty votes will bother us. What a pity J. H. made that speech!"

"It appears that as Patrick has grown rich, Patrick has grown fond of protection, then," remarked Y, crossing one long leg over the other.

"Exactly," said Z. "That is it. Now the question is, who owns Patrick? Anybody know?"

"Whoever can pay for him, I expect," said the president.

"Now I have an idea," said the old man suddenly, and again he dived into the book. "Did either of you ever know a man called Vancouver?"

"Yes—I know all about him," said Y, and a contemptuous smile hinted beforehand what he thought of the man.

"I made an entry about him the other day," said the president. "You will find a good deal against his name."

"Here he is," said Z again. "Pocock Vancouver. Railways. Rep. Boston, Mass. Was taxed in 1870 for nearly a million dollars.

Weak character, very astute. Takes no money. Believed to be dissipated, but he cleverly conceals it. Never votes. Has extensive financial interests. 1880, taxed for nearly three millions. 1881, paid ten thousand dollars to Patrick Ballymolloy (D) for carrying a motion for the Monadminck Railroad (see Railroads). 1882, voted for Butler—"

"Hollo!" exclaimed the president.

"Wait," said Z, "there is more. 1883, thought to be writer of articles against J. H. in Boston *Daily Standard*. Subsequently confirmed by J. H. That is all."

"Yes," said the president, "that last note is mine. Harrington wired it yesterday with other things. But I was hurried and did not read his old record. Things could not be much worse. You see Harrington has no book with him, or he would know all this, and be on the look-out."

"Has he figured it out?" inquired Y.

"Yes, he has figured it out. He is a first-rate man, and he has the whole thing down cold. Ballymolloy and his twenty votes will carry the election, and if Vancouver cares he

can buy Mr. Ballymolloy as he has done before. He does care, if he is going to take the trouble to write articles against J. H., depend upon it."

"Well, there is nothing for it," said Z, who, in spite of his age, was the most impulsive of the three. "We must buy Ballymolloy ourselves, with his twenty men."

"I think that would be a mistake," said the president.

"Do you?" said Z. "What do you say?" he asked, turning to Y.

"Nothing," replied Y.

"Then we will argue it, I suppose," said Z.

"Certainly," said the president. "I will begin." He settled himself in his chair and knocked the ashes from his cigar.

"I will begin by stating the exact position," he said. "In the first place this whole affair is accidental, resulting from the death of the junior senator. No one could foresee this event. We had arranged to put in John Harrington at the regular vacancy next year, and we are now very busy with a most important business here in London. If we were on the spot, as one of us could have been had

we known that the senator would die, it would have been another matter. This thing will be settled by next Saturday at the latest, but probably earlier. I am opposed to buying Ballymolloy, because it is an uncertain purchase. He has taken money from both sides, and if he has the chance he will do it again. If we were present it would be different, for we could hold him to his bargain.

"We do not like buying, and we only do it in very urgent cases, and when we are certain of the result. To buy without certainty is simply to begin a system of reckless bribery, which is exactly what we want to put down. Moreover, it is a bad plan to bribe a man who is interested in iron. The man in that business ought to be with us anyway, without anything but a little talking to. When you have stated any reasons to the contrary I will tell you what I propose instead. That is all."

During the president's little speech, Y and Z had listened attentively. When he had finished, Z turned in his chair and took his cigar from his lips.

"I think," said Z, "that the case is urgent.

The question is just about coming to a head, and we want all the men we can get at any price. It will not do to let a chance slip. If we can put J. H. in the senate now, we may put another man in at the vacancy. That makes two men instead of one. I am aware that it would be an improbable thing to get two of our men in for Massachusetts; but I believe it can be done, and for that reason I think we ought to make an effort to get J. H. in now. It may cost something, but I do not believe it is uncertain. I expect Vancouver is not the sort of man to spend much just for the sake of spite. The question of buying as a rule is another matter. None of us want that; but if the case is urgent I think there is no question about its being right. Of course it is a great pity J. H. said anything about protection in that speech. He did not mean to, but he could not help it, and at all events he had no idea his election was so near. If we are not certain of the result, J. H. ought to withdraw, because it will injure his chance at the vacancy to have him defeated now. That is all I have to say."

"I am of opinion," said the president, "that our best plan is to let John Harrington take his chance. You know who his opponent is, I suppose?"

"Ira C. Calvin," said Y and Z together.

"Calvin refused last night," said the president, "and they have put Jobbins in his place. Here is the telegram. It is code three," he remarked, handing it to Z.

Z read it, and his face expressed the greatest surprise.

"But Jobbins belongs to us," he cried. "He will not move hand or foot unless we advise him!"

"Of course," said the president. "But Mr. Ballymolloy does not know that, nor any other member of the Legislature. Harrington himself does not know it. Verdict, please."

"Verdict against buying," said Y.

"Naturally," said Z. "What a set of fools they are! How about withdrawing Harrington?"

"I object," said the president. "Proceed."

"I think it will injure his chance at the

vacancy to have him defeated now, as I said before. That is all," said Z.

"I think it would be dangerous to withdraw him before so weak a man as Jobbins. It would hurt his reputation. Besides, our second man is in Washington arguing a case; and, after all, there is a bare chance that J. H. may win. If he does not, we win all the same, for Jobbins is in chains. Verdict, please."

Y was silent, and smoked thoughtfully. For five minutes no one spoke, and the president occupied the time in arranging some papers.

"Let him stand his chance," said Y, at last. In spite of the apparent informality of the meetings of the three, there was an unchangeable rule in their proceedings. Whenever a question arose, the member who first objected to the proposition argued the case briefly, or at length, with the proposer, and the third gave the verdict, against which there was no appeal.

These three strong men possessed between them an enormous power. It rarely happened

that they could all meet together and settle upon their course of action by word of mouth, but constant correspondence and the use of an extensive set of telegraphic codes kept them in unbroken communication. No oaths or ceremonies bound them together, for they belonged to a small community of men which has existed from the earliest days of American independence, and which took its rise before that period.

Into this council of three, men of remarkable ability and spotless character were elected without much respect of age whenever a vacancy occurred. They worked quietly, with one immutable political purpose, with which they allowed no prejudiced party view to interfere. Always having under their immediate control some of the best talent in the country and frequently commanding vast financial resources, these men and their predecessors had more than once turned the scale of the country's future. They had committed great mistakes, but they had also brought about noble results. It had frequently occurred that all the three members of the council

simultaneously held seats in the senate, or that one or more were high in office. More than one President since Washington had sat at one time or another in the triumvirate; secretaries of state, orators, lawyers, financiers and philanthropists had given the best years of their lives to the duties of the council; and yet, so perfect was the organization, the tests were so careful, and so marvellously profound was the insight of the leaders into human character, that of all these men, not one had ever betrayed the confidence placed in him. In the truest sense they and their immediate supporters formed an order; an order of true men with whom the love of justice, honour, and freedom, took the place of oath and ceremonial, binding them by stronger obligations than ever bound a ring of conspirators or a community of religious zealots.

The great element of secrecy as regards the outer world lay in the fact that only two men at any one time knew of the existence of the council of three, and these were those who were considered fit to sit in the council them-

selves. Even these two did not know more than one of the three leaders as such, though probably personally and even intimately acquainted with all three. The body of men whom the council controlled was ignorant of its existence therefore, and was composed of the personal adherents of each of the three. Manifestly one member of the council could, with the consent and co-operation of the other two, command the influence of the whole body of political adherents in favour of one of his friends, at any time, leaving the individual in entire ignorance of the power employed for his advancement. When a vacancy occurred in the council, by death or old age of any member, one of the two already designated took the place, while the other remained ignorant of the fact that any change had occurred, unless the vacancy was caused by the withdrawal of the member he had known, in which case he was put in communication with that member with whom he was most intimately acquainted. By this system of management no one man knew more than one of the actual leaders until he was himself one of the three.

At the present time Z had been in the council nearly thirty years, and X for upwards of twenty, while Y, who was in reality fifty years old, had received his seat fifteen years before, at the age of thirty-five. A year ago one of the men selected to fill a possible vacancy had died, and John Harrington was chosen in his place.

It has been seen that the three kept a sort of political ledger, which was always in the hands of the president for the time being, whose duty it was to make the insertions necessary from time to time. Some conception of the extent and value of the book may be formed from the fact that it contained upwards of ten thousand names, including those of almost every prominent man, and of not a few remarkable women in the principal centres of the country. The details given were invariably brief and to the point, written down in a simple but safe form of cipher which was perfectly familiar to every one of the three. This vast mass of information was simply the outcome of the personal experience of the leaders, and of their trusted friends, but no detail which

could by any possibility be of use escaped being committed to paper, and the result was in many cases a positive knowledge of future events, which, to any one unacquainted with the system, must have appeared little short of miraculous.

"What time is it in Boston?" inquired the president, rising and going to the writing-table.

"Twenty-eight minutes past seven," said Y, producing an enormous three-dial time-piece, set to indicate simultaneously the time of day in London, Boston, and Washington.

"All right, there is plenty of time," answered X, writing out a despatch on a broad white sheet of cable office paper. "See here—is this all right?" he asked, when he had done.

The message ran as follows:—"Do not withdraw. If possible gain Ballymolloy and men, but on no account pay for them. If asked, say iron protection necessary at present, and probably for many years."

Y and Z read the telegram, and said it would do. In ten minutes it was taken to the telegraph office by X's servant.

"And now," said X, lighting a fresh cigar,

"we have disposed of this accident, and we can turn to our regular business. The question is broadly, what effect will be produced by suddenly throwing eight or ten millions of English money into an American enterprise?"

"When Englishmen are not making money, they are a particularly disagreeable set of people to deal with," remarked Y, who would have been taken for an Englishman himself in any part of the world.

And so the council left John Harrington, and turned to other matters which do not in any way concern this tale.

John received the despatch at half-past ten o'clock in the morning after the dinner at Mrs. Wyndham's, and he read it without comprehending precisely the position taken by his instructor. Nevertheless, the order coincided with what he would have done if left to himself. He of course could not know that even if his opponent were elected it would be a gain to his own party, for the outward life of Mr. Jobbins gave no cause for believing that he was in anybody's power. Harrington was left to suppose that, if he failed to get the votes of Patrick

Ballymolloy and his party, the election would be a dead loss. Nevertheless, he rejoiced that the said Patrick was not to be bought. An honourable failure, wherein he might honestly say that he had bribed no one, nor used any undue pressure, would in his opinion be better than to be elected ten times over by money, and promises of political jobbery.

The end rarely justifies the means, and there are means so foul that they would blot any result into their own filthiness. All that the world can write, or think, or say, will never make it honourable or noble to bribe and tell lies. Men who lie are not brave because they are willing to be shot at in some instances by the men their falsehoods have injured. Men who pay others to agree with them are doing a wrong upon the dignity of human nature, and they very generally end by saying that human nature has no dignity at all, and very possibly by being themselves corrupted.

Nevertheless, so great is the interest which men, even upright and honourable men, take in the aims they follow, that they believe it possible to wade knee-deep through mud, and

then ascend to the temple of fame without dragging the mud with them, and befouling the white marble steps.

'Political necessity!' What deeds are done in thy name! What a merciful and polite goddess was the necessity of the ancients, compared with the necessity of the moderns. Political necessity has been hard at work in our times from Robespierre to Sedan, from St. Helena to the Vatican, from the Tea-chests of Boston Harbour to the Great Rebellion. Political necessity has done more lying, more bribery, more murdering, and more stealing in a century, than could have been invented by all the Roman emperors together, with the assistance of the devil himself.

CHAPTER II.

In all the endless folk-lore of proverbs, there is perhaps no adage more true than that which warns young people to beware of a new love until they have done with the old, and as Ronald Surbiton reflected on his position, the old rhyme ran through his head. He was strongly attracted by Sybil Brandon, but, at the same time, he still felt that he ought to make an effort to win Joe back. It seemed so unmanly to relinquish her without a struggle, just because she said she did not love him. It could not be true, for they had loved each other so long.

When Ronald looked out of the window of his room in the hotel, on the morning after Mrs. Wyndham's dinner, the snow was falling

as it can only fall in Boston. The great houses opposite were almost hidden from view by the soft, fluttering flakes, and below, in the broad street, the horse-cars moved slowly along like immense white turtles ploughing their way through deep white sand. The sound of the bells was muffled as it came up, and the scraping of the Irishmen's heavy spades on the pavement before the hotel, followed by the regular fall of the great shovels-full on the heap, as they stacked the snow, sounded like the digging of a gigantic grave.

Ronald felt that his spirits were depressed. He watched the drifting storm for a few minutes, and then turned away and looked for a novel in his bag, and filled a pipe with some English tobacco he had jealously guarded from the lynx-eyed custom-house men in New York, and then sat down with a sigh before his small coal fire, and prepared to pass the morning, in solitude.

But Ronald was not fond of reading, and at the end of half-an-hour he threw his book and his pipe aside, and stretched his long limbs. Then he rose and went to the window again

with an expression of utter weariness such as only an Englishman can put on when he is thoroughly bored. The snow was falling as thickly as ever, and the turtle-backed horse-cars crawled by through the drifts, more and more slowly. Ronald turned away with an impatient ejaculation, and made up his mind that he would go and see Joe at once. He wrapped himself carefully in a huge ulster overcoat and went out.

Joe was sitting alone in the drawing-room, curled up in an old-fashioned arm-chair by the fire, with a book in her lap which she was not reading. She had asked her aunt for something about politics, and Miss Schenectady had given her the 'Life of Rufus Choate,' in two large black volumes. The book was interesting, but in Joe's mind it was but a step from the speeches and doings of the great and brilliant lawyer-senator, to the speeches and doings of John Harrington. And so after a while the book dropped upon her knee and she leaned far back in the chair, her great brown eyes staring dreamily at the glowing coals.

"I was so awfully lonely," said Ronald, sitting

down beside her, "that I came here. You do not mind, Joe, do you?"

"Mind? No! I am very glad. It must be dreadfully lonely for you at the hotel. What have you been doing with yourself?"

"Oh — trying to read. And then, I was thinking about you."

"That is not much of an occupation. See how industrious I am. I have been reading the 'Life and Writings of Rufus Choate.' I am getting to be a complete Bostonian."

"Have you read it all? I never heard of him. Who was he?"

"He was an extremely clever man. He must have been very nice, and his speeches are splendid. You ought to read them."

"Joe, you are going to be a regular blue-stocking! The idea of spending your time in reading such stuff. Why, it would be almost better to read the parliamentary reports in the *Times!* Just fancy!" Ronald laughed at the idea of any human being descending to such drudgery.

"Don't be silly, Ronald. You do not know anything about it," said Joe.

"Oh, it is of no use discussing the question," answered Ronald. "You young women are growing altogether too clever, with your politics, and your philosophy, and your culture. I hate America!"

"If you really knew anything about it, you would like it very much. Besides, you have no right to say you hate it. The people here have been very good to you already. You ought not to abuse them."

"No—not the people. But just look at that snow-storm, Joe, and tell me whether America is a place for human beings to live in."

"It is much prettier than a Scotch mist, and ever so much clearer than a fog in London," retorted Joe.

"But there is nothing for a fellow to do on a day like this," said Ronald sulkily.

"Nothing, but to come and see his cousin, and abuse everything to her, and try to make her as discontented as himself," said Joe, mimicking his tone.

"If I thought you liked me to come and see you—" began Ronald.

"Well?"

"It would be different, you know."

"I like you when you are nice and good-tempered," said Joe. "But when you are bored you are simply—well, you are dreadful." Joe raised her eyebrows and tapped with her fingers on the arm of the chair.

"Do you think I can ever be bored when I come to see you, Joe?" asked Ronald, changing his tone.

"You act as if you were, precisely. You know people who are bored are generally bores themselves."

"Thanks," said Ronald. "How kind you are!"

"Do say something nice, Ronald. You have done nothing but find fault since you came. Have you heard from home?"

"No. There has not been time yet. Why do you ask?"

"Because I thought you might say something less disagreeable about home than you seem able to say about things here," said Joe tartly.

"You do not want me this morning. I will go away again," said Ronald with a gloomy

frown. He rose to his feet, as though about to take his leave.

"Oh, don't go, Ronald." He paused. "Besides," added Joe, "Sybil will be here in a little while."

"You need not offer me Miss Brandon as an inducement to stay with you, Joe, if you really want me. Twenty Miss Brandons would not make any difference!"

"Really?" said Joe smiling. "You are a dear good boy, Ronald, when you are nice," she added presently. "Sit down again."

Ronald went back to his seat beside her, and they were both silent for a while. Joe repented a little, for she thought she had been teasing him, and she reflected that she ought to be doing her best to make him happy.

"Joe—do not you think it would be very pleasant to be always like this?" said Ronald after a time.

"How—like this?"

"Together," said Ronald softly, and a gentle look came into his handsome face, as he looked up at his cousin. "Together—only in our own home."

Joe did not answer, but the colour came to her cheeks, and she looked annoyed. She had hoped that the matter was settled for ever, for it seemed so easy for her. Ronald misinterpreted the blush. For the moment the old conviction came back to him that she was to be his wife, and if it was not exactly love that he felt, it was a satisfaction almost great enough to take its place.

"Would it not?" said he presently.

"Please do not talk about it, Ronald. What is the use? I have said all there is to say, I am sure."

"But I have not," he answered, insisting. "Please, Joe dearest, think about it seriously. Think what a cruel thing it is you are doing." His voice was tender, but he was perfectly calm; there was not the slightest vibration of passion in the tones. Joe did not wholly understand; she only knew that he was not satisfied with the first explanation she had given him, and that she felt sorry for him, but was incapable of changing her decision.

"Must I go over it all again?" she asked

piteously. "Did I not make it clear to you, Ronald? Oh—don't talk about it!"

"You have no heart, Joe," said Ronald hotly. "You don't know what you make me suffer. You don't know that this sort of thing is enough to wreck a man's existence altogether. You don't know what you are doing, because you have no heart—not the least bit of one."

"Do not say that—please do not," Joe entreated, looking at him with imploring eyes, for his words hurt her. Then suddenly the tears came in a quick hot gush, and she hid her face in her hands. "Oh, Ronald, Ronald—it is you who do not know," she sobbed.

Ronald did not quite know what to do; he never did when Joe cried, but fortunately that disaster had not occurred often since she was very small. He was angry with himself for having disturbed and hurt her, but he did not know what to do, most probably because he did not really love her.

"Joe," he said, looking at her in some embarrassment, "don't!" Then he rose and rather timidly laid a hand on her shoulder. But she

shrank from him with a petulant motion, and the tears trickled through her small white hands and fell upon her dark dress and on the 'Life of Rufus Choate.'

"Joe, dear—" Ronald began again. And then, in great uncertainty of mind, he went and looked out of the window. Presently he came back and stood before her once more.

"I am awfully sorry I said it, Joe. Please forgive me. You don't often cry, you know, and so—" he hesitated.

Joe looked up at him with a smile through her tears, beautiful as a rose just wet with a summer shower.

"And so—you did not think I could," she said. She dried her eyes quickly and rose to her feet. "It is very silly of me, I know, but I cannot help it in the least," said she, turning from him in pretence of arranging the knick-knacks on the mantelpiece.

"Of course you cannot help it, Joe dear; as if you had not a perfect right to cry, if you like! I am such a brute—I know."

"Come and look at the snow," said Joe, taking his hand and leading him to the window.

Enormous Irishmen in pilot coats, comforters, and india-rubber boots, armed with broad wooden spades, were struggling to keep the drifts from the pavement. Joe and Ronald stood and watched them idly, absorbed in their own thoughts.

Presently a "booby" sleigh drawn by a pair of strong black horses floundered up the hill and stopped at the door.

"Oh, Ronald, there is Sybil, and she will see I have been crying. You must amuse her, and I will come back in a few minutes." She turned and fled, leaving Ronald at the window.

A footman sprang to the ground, and nearly lost his footing in the snow as he opened a large umbrella and rang the bell. In a moment Sybil was out of the sleigh and at the door of the house; she could not sit still till it was opened, although the flakes were falling as thickly as ever.

"Oh—" she exclaimed, as she entered the room and was met by Ronald, "I thought Joe was here." There was colour in her face, and she took Ronald's hand cordially. He blushed to the eyes and stammered.

"Miss Thorn is—she—indeed, she will be back in a moment. How do you do? Dreadful weather, is not it?"

"Oh, it is only a snowstorm," said Sybil, brushing a few flakes from her furs as she came near the fire. "We do not mind it at all here. But of course you never have snow in England."

"Not like this, certainly," said Ronald. "Let me help you," he added, as Sybil began to remove her cloak.

It was a very sudden change of company for Ronald; five minutes ago he was trying, very clumsily and hopelessly, to console Joe Thorn in her tears, feeling angry enough with himself all the while for having caused them. Now he was face to face with Sybil Brandon, the most beautiful woman he remembered to have seen, and she smiled at him as he took her heavy cloak from her shoulders, and the touch of the fur sent a thrill to his heart, and the blood to his cheeks.

"I must say," he remarked, depositing the things on a sofa, "you are very courageous to come out, even though you are used to it."

"You have come yourself," said Sybil, laughing

a little. "You told me last night that you did not come here every day."

"Oh—I told my cousin I had come because I was so lonely at the hotel. It is amazingly dull to sit all day in a close room reading stupid novels."

"I should think it would be. Have you nothing else to do?"

"Nothing in the wide world," said Ronald with a smile. "What should I do here, in a strange place, where I know so few people?"

"I suppose there is not much for a man to do, unless he is in business. Every one here is in some kind of business, you know, so they are never bored."

Ronald wished he could say the right thing to re-establish the half-intimacy he had felt when talking to Sybil the night before. But it was not easy to get back to the same point. There was an interval of hours between yesterday and to-day—and there was Joe.

"I read novels to pass the time," he said, "and because they are sometimes so like one's own life. But when they are not, they bore me."

Sybil was fond of reading, and she was especially fond of fiction, not because she cared for sensational interests, but because she was naturally contemplative, and it interested her to read about human nature of the present, rather than to learn what any individual historian thought of the human nature of the past.

"What kind of novels do you like best?" she asked, sitting down to pass the time with Ronald until Josephine should make her appearance.

"I like love stories best," said Ronald.

"Oh, of course," said Sybil gravely, "so do I. But what kind do you like best? The sad ones, or those that end well?"

"I like them to end well," said Ronald, "because the best ones never do, you know."

"Never?" There was something in Sybil's tone that made Ronald look quickly at her. She said the word as though she, too, had something to regret.

"Not in my experience," answered Surbiton, with the decision of a man past loving or being loved.

"How dreadfully gloomy! One would think you had done with life, Mr. Surbiton," said Sybil, laughing.

"Sometimes I think so, Miss Brandon," answered Ronald in solemn tones.

"I suppose we all think it would be nice to die, sometimes. But then the next morning things look so much brighter."

"I think they often look much brighter in the evening," said Ronald, thinking of the night before.

"I am sure something disagreeable has happened to you to-day, Mr. Surbiton," said Sybil, looking at him. Ronald looked into her eyes as though to see if there were any sympathy there.

"Yes, something disagreeable has happened to me," he answered slowly. "Something very disagreeable and painful."

"I am sorry," said Sybil simply. But her voice sounded very kind and comforting.

"That is why I say that love stories always end badly in real life," said Ronald. "But I suppose I ought not to complain." It was not until he had thought over this speech, some

minutes later, that he realized that in a few words he had told Sybil the main part of his troubles. He never guessed that she was so far in Joe's confidence as to have heard the whole story before. But Sybil was silent and thoughtful.

"Love is such an uncertain thing," she began, after a pause; and it chanced that at that very moment Joe opened the door and entered the room. She caught the sentence.

"So you are instructing my cousin," she said to Sybil, laughing. "I approve of the way you spend your time, my children!" No one would have believed that, twenty minutes earlier, Joe had been in tears. She was as fresh and as gay as ever, and Ronald said to himself that she most certainly had no heart, but that Sybil had a great deal,—he was sure of it from the tone of her voice.

"What is the news about the election, Sybil?" she asked. "Of course you know all about it at the Wyndhams'."

"My dear, the family politics are in a state of confusion that is simply too delightful," said Sybil. "You know it is said that Ira C. Calvin

has refused to be a candidate, and the Republicans mean to put in Mr. Jobbins in his place, who is such a popular man, and so good and benevolent—quite a philanthropist."

"Does it make very much difference?" asked Joe anxiously. "I wish I understood all about it, but the local names are so hard to learn."

"I thought you had been learning them all the morning in Choate," put in Ronald, who perceived that the conversation was to be about Harrington.

"It does make a difference," said Sybil, not noticing Ronald's remark, "because Jobbins is much more popular than Calvin, and they say he is a friend of Patrick Ballymolloy, who will win the election for either side he favours."

"Who is this Irishman?" inquired Ronald.

"He is the chief Irishman," said Sybil laughing, "and I cannot describe him any better. He has twenty votes with him, and as things stand he always carries whichever point he favours. But Mr. Wyndham says he is glad he is not in the Legislature, because it would drive him out of his mind to decide on which

side to vote—though he is a good Republican, you know."

"Of course he could vote for Mr. Harrington in spite of that," said Joe, confidently. "Anybody would, who knows him, I am sure. But when is the election to come off?"

"They say it is to begin to-day," said Sybil.

"We shall never hear anything unless we go to Mrs. Wyndham's," said Joe. "Aunt Zoë is awfully clever, and that, but she never knows in the least what is going on. She says she does not understand politics."

"If you were a Bostonian, Mr. Surbiton," said Sybil, "you would get into the State House and hear the earliest news."

"I will do anything in the world to oblige you," said Ronald gravely, "if you will only explain a little—"

"Oh no! It is quite impossible. Come with me, both of you, and we will get some lunch at the Wyndhams' and hear all about it by telephone."

"Very well," said Joe. "One moment, while I get my things." She left the room. Ronald and Sybil were again alone together.

"You were saying when my cousin came in, that love was a very uncertain thing," suggested Ronald, rather timidly.

"Was I?" said Sybil, standing before the mirror above the mantelpiece, and touching her hat first on one side and then on the other.

"Yes," answered Ronald, watching her. "Do you know, I have often thought so too."

"Yes?"

"I think it would be something different if it were quite certain. Perhaps it would be something much less interesting, but much better."

"I think you are a little confused, Mr. Surbiton," said Sybil, and as she smiled, Ronald could see her face reflected in the mirror.

"I—yes—that is—I daresay I am," said he, hesitatingly. "But I know exactly what I mean."

"But do you know exactly what you want?" she asked with a laugh.

"Yes indeed," said he confidently. "But I do not believe I shall ever get it."

"Then that is the 'disagreeable and pain-

ful thing' you referred to, as having happened this morning, I suppose," remarked Sybil, calmly, as she turned to take up her cloak which lay on the sofa. Ronald blushed scarlet.

"Well — yes," he said, forgetting in his embarrassment to help her.

"It is so heavy," said Sybil. "Thanks. Do you know that you have been making confidences to me, Mr. Surbiton?" she asked, turning and facing him, with a half-amused, half-serious look in her blue eyes.

"I am afraid I have," he answered after a short pause. "You must think I am very foolish."

"Never mind," she said gravely. "They are safe with me."

"Thanks," said Ronald in a low voice.

Josephine entered the room, clad in many furs, and a few minutes later all three were on their way to Mrs. Wyndham's, the big 'booby' sleigh rocking and leaping and ploughing in the heavy dry snow.

CHAPTER III.

POCOCK VANCOUVER was also abroad in the snowstorm. He would not in any case have stayed at home on account of the weather, but on this particular morning he had very urgent business with a gentleman who, like Lamb, rose with the lark, though he did not go to bed with the chickens. There are no larks in Boston, but the scream of the locomotives answers nearly as well.

Vancouver accordingly had himself driven at an early hour to a certain house not situated in the West End, but of stone quite as brown, and having a bay window as prominent as any sixteen-foot-front on Beacon Street; those advantages, however, did not prevent Mr. Vancouver from wearing an expression of fastidious scorn as he mounted the steps and pulled the

polished German silver handle of the door-bell. The curl on his lip gave way to a smile of joyous cordiality as he was ushered into the presence of the owner of the house.

"Indeed, I'm glad to see you, Mr. Vancouver," said his host, whose extremely Celtic appearance was not belied by unctuous modulation of his voice, and the pleasant roll of his softly aspirated consonants.

This great man was no other than Mr. Patrick Ballymolloy. He received Vancouver in his study, which was handsomely furnished with bright green wall-paper, a sideboard on which stood a number of decanters and glasses, several leather easy-chairs, and a green china spittoon.

In personal appearance, Mr. Patrick Ballymolloy was vastly more striking than attractive. He was both corpulent and truculent, and his hands and feet were of a size and thickness calculated to crush a paving-stone at a step, or to fell an ox at a blow. The nails of his fingers were of a hue which is made artificially fashionable in eastern countries, but which excites prejudice in western civilization from an undue

display of real estate. A neck which the Minotaur might have justly envied surmounted the thickness and roundness of Mr. Ballymolloy's shoulders, and supported a head more remarkable for the immense cavity of the mouth, and for a quantity of highly pomaded sandy hair, than for any intellectuality of the brows or high bred fineness of the nose. Mr. Ballymolloy's nose was nevertheless an astonishing feature, and at a distance called vividly to mind the effect of one of those great glass bottles of reddened water, behind which apothecaries of all degrees put a lamp at dusk in order that their light may the better shine in the darkness. It was one of the most surprising feats of nature's alchemy that a liquid so brown as that contained in the decanters on Patrick's sideboard should be able to produce and maintain anything so supernaturally red as Patrick's nose.

Mr. Ballymolloy was clad in a beautiful suit of shiny black broadcloth, and the front of his coat was irregularly but richly adorned with a profusion of grease-spots of all sizes. A delicate suggestive mezzotint shaded the edges

of his collar and cuffs, and from his heavy gold watch-chain depended a malachite seal of unusual greenness and brilliancy.

Vancouver took the gigantic outstretched hand of his host in his delicate fingers, with an air of cordiality which, if not genuine, was very well assumed.

"I'm glad to see you, sir," said the Irishman again.

"Thanks," said Vancouver, "and I am fortunate in finding you at home."

Mr. Ballymolloy smiled, and pushed one of his leather easy chairs towards the fire. Both men sat down.

"I suppose you are pretty busy over this election, Mr. Ballymolloy," said Vancouver, blandly.

"Now, that's just it, Mr. Vancouver," replied the Irishman. "That's just exactly what's the matter with me, for indeed I am very busy, and that's the truth."

"Just so, Mr. Ballymolloy. Especially since the change last night. I remember what a good friend you have always been to Mr. Jobbins."

"Well, as you say, Mr. Vancouver, I have been thinking that I and Mr. Jobbins are pretty good friends, and that's just about what it is, I think."

"Yes, I remember that on more than one occasion you and he have acted together in the affairs of the state," said Vancouver, thoughtfully.

"Ah, but it's the sowl of him that I like," answered Mr. Ballymolloy very sweetly. "He has such a beautiful sowl, Mr. Jobbins; it does me good, and indeed it does, Mr. Vancouver."

"As you say, sir, a man full of broad human sympathies. Nevertheless I feel sure that on the present occasion your political interests will lead you to follow the promptings of duty, and to vote in favour of the Democratic candidate. I wish you and I did not differ in politics, Mr. Ballymolloy."

"And, indeed, there is not so very much difference, if it comes to that, Mr. Vancouver," replied Patrick in conciliating tones. "But it's just what I have been thinking, that I will vote for Mr. Harrington. It's a matter of principle with me, Mr. Vancouver, and that's it exactly."

"And where should we all be without principles, Mr. Ballymolloy? Indeed I may say that the importance of principles in political matters is very great."

"And it's just the greatest pity in the world that every one has not principles like you, Mr. Vancouver. I'm speaking the truth now." According to Mr. Patrick Ballymolloy's view of destiny, it was the truth and nothing but the truth. He knew Vancouver of old, and Vancouver knew him.

"You flatter me, sir," said Pocock, affecting a pleased smile. "To tell the truth, there is a little matter I wanted to speak to you about, if you can spare me half-an-hour."

"Indeed, I'm most entirely delighted to be at your service, Mr. Vancouver, and I'm glad you came so early in the morning."

"The fact is, Mr. Ballymolloy, we are thinking of making an extension on one of our lines; a small matter, but of importance to us."

"I guess it must be the branch of the Pocahontas and Dead Man's Valley you'll be speaking of, Mr. Vancouver," said the Irishman, with sudden and cheerful interest.

"Really, Mr. Ballymolloy, you are a man of the most surprising quickness. It is a real pleasure to talk with you on such matters. I have no doubt you understand the whole question thoroughly."

"Well, it's of no use at all to say I know nothing about it, because I *have* heard it mentioned, and that's the plain truth, Mr. Vancouver. And it will take a deal of rail, too, and that's another thing. And where do you think of getting the iron from, Mr. Vancouver?"

"Well, I had hoped, Mr. Ballymolloy," said Vancouver, with some affected hesitation, "that as an old friend, we might be able to manage matters with you. But, of course, this is entirely unofficial, and between ourselves."

Mr. Ballymolloy nodded with something very like a wink of one bloodshot eye. He knew what he was about.

"And when will you be thinking of beginning the work, Mr. Vancouver?" he inquired after a short pause.

"That is just the question, or rather, perhaps,

I should say the difficulty. We do not expect to begin work for a year or so."

"And surely that makes no difference, then, at all," returned Patrick. "For the longer the time, the easier it will be for me to accommodate you."

"Ah—but you see, Mr. Ballymolloy, it may be that in a year's time these new-fangled ideas about free trade may be law, and it may be much cheaper for us to get our rails from England, as Mr. Vanderbilt did three or four years ago, when he was in such a hurry, you remember."

"And, indeed, I remember it very well, Mr. Vancouver."

"Just so. Now you see, Mr. Ballymolloy, I am speaking to you entirely as a friend, though I hope I may before long bring about an official agreement. But you see the difficulty of making a contract a year ahead, when a party of Democratic senators and Congressmen may by that time have upset the duty on steel rails, don't you?"

"And, indeed, I see it as plain as day, Mr. Vancouver. And that's why I was saying I

wished every one had such principles as yourself, and I'm telling you no lie when I say it again." Verily Mr. Ballymolloy was a truthful person!

"Very well. Now, do not you think, Mr. Ballymolloy, that all this talk about free trade is great nonsense?"

"And, surely, it will be the ruin of the whole country, Mr. Vancouver."

"Besides, free trade has nothing to do with Democratic principles, has it? You see, here am I, the best Republican in Massachusetts, and here are you, the best Democrat in the country, and we both agree in saying that it is great nonsense to leave iron unprotected."

"Ah, it's the principle of you I like, Mr. Vancouver!" exclaimed Ballymolloy in great admiration. "It's your principles are beautiful, just!"

"Very good, sir. Now of course you are going to vote for Mr. Harrington to-day, or to-morrow, or whenever the election is to be. Don't you think you might say something to him that would be of some use? I believe he is very uncertain about protection, you

see. I think you could persuade him, somehow."

"Well, now, Mr. Vancouver, it's the truth when I tell you I was just thinking of speaking to him about it, just a little, before I went up to the State House. And indeed I'll be going to him immediately."

"I think it is the wisest plan," said Vancouver, rising to go, "and we will speak about the contract next week, when all this election business is over."

"Ah, and indeed, I hope it will be soon, sir," said Ballymolloy. "But you'll not think of going out again in the snow without taking a drop of something, will you, Mr. Vancouver?" He went to the sideboard and poured out two stiff doses of the amber liquid.

"Since you are so kind," said Vancouver, graciously taking the proffered glass. He knew better than to refuse to drink over a bargain.

"Well, here goes," he said.

"And luck to yourself, Mr. Vancouver," said Ballymolloy.

"I think you can persuade him, somehow,"

said Vancouver, as his host opened the street-door for him to go out.

"And, indeed, I think so too," said Ballymolloy. Then he went back to his study and poured out a second glass of whiskey. "And if I cannot persuade him," he continued in soliloquy, "why, then, it will just be old Jobbins who will be senator, and that's the plain truth."

Vancouver went away with a light heart, and the frank smile on his delicate features was most pleasant to see. He knew John Harrington well, and he was certain that Mr. Ballymolloy's proposal would rouse the honest wrath of the man he detested.

Half-an-hour later Mr. Ballymolloy entered Harrington's room in Charles Street. John was seated at the table, fully dressed, and writing letters. He offered his visitor a seat.

"So the election is coming on right away, Mr. Harrington," began Patrick, making himself comfortable, and lighting one of John's cigars.

"So I hear, Mr. Ballymolloy," answered John with a pleasant smile. "I hope I may count on you, in spite of what you said yesterday.

These are the times when men must keep together."

"Now, Mr. Harrington, you'll not believe that I could go to the House and vote against my own party, surely, will you now?" said Patrick. But there was a tinge of irony in his soft tones. He knew that Vancouver could make him great and advantageous business transactions, and he treated him accordingly. John Harrington was, on the other hand, a mere candidate for his twenty votes; he could make John senator if he chose, or defeat him, if he preferred it, and he accordingly behaved to John with an air of benevolent superiority.

"I trust you would do no such thing, Mr. Ballymolloy," said John gravely. "Without advocating myself as in any way fit for the honours of the Senate, I can say that it is of the utmost importance that we should have as many Democrats in Congress as possible, in the Senate as well as in the House."

"Surely you don't think I doubt that, Mr. Harrington? And indeed the Senate is pretty well Democratic as it is."

"Yes," said John, smiling, "but the more

the better, I should think. It is a very different matter from the local Legislature, where changes may often do good."

"Indeed and it is, Mr. Harrington. And will you please to tell me what you will do about free trade, when you're in the Senate, sir?"

"I am afraid I cannot tell you anything that I did not tell you yesterday, Mr. Ballymolloy. I am a tariff reform man. It is a great Democratic movement, and I should be bound to support it, even if I were not myself so thorough a believer in it as I am."

"Now see here, Mr. Harrington, it's the gospel truth I'm telling you, when I say you're mistaken. Here are plenty of us Democrats who don't want the least little bit of free trade. I'm in the iron business, Mr. Harrington, and you won't be after thinking me such an all-powerful galoot as to cut my own nose off, will you?"

"Well, not exactly," said John, who was used to many peculiarities of language in his visitors. "But, of course, iron will be the thing last on the tariff. I am of opinion that it is necessary

to put enough tax on iron to protect home-producers at the time of greatest depression. That is fair, is not it?"

"I daresay you may think so, Mr. Harrington," said Ballymolloy, knocking the ashes from his cigar. "But you are not an iron man, now, are you?"

"Certainly not," said John. "But I have studied the question, and I know its importance. In a reformation of the tariff, iron would be one of the things most carefully provided for."

"Oh, I know all that," said Ballymolloy, somewhat roughly, "and there's not much you can tell me about tariff reform that I don't know, neither. And when you have reformed other things you'll be for reforming iron, too, just to keep your hands in. And, indeed, I've no objection whatever to your reforming everything you like, so long as you don't interfere with me and mine. But I don't trust the principles of the thing, sir; I don't trust them the least little bit, and for me I would rather there were not to be any reforming at all, except for the Chinamen, and I don't care much for them, neither, and that's a fact."

"Very good, Mr. Ballymolloy. Every man has a right to his free opinion. But we stand on the reform platform, for there is no country in the world where reform is more needed than it is here. I can only repeat that the interests of the iron trade stand high with the Democratic party, and that it is highly improbable that any law will interfere with iron for many years. I cannot say more than that and yet stick to facts."

"Always stick to facts, Mr. Harrington. You will find the truth a very important thing indeed, and good principles too, in dealing with plain-spoken men like myself, sir. Stick to the truth, Mr. Harrington, for ever and ever."

"I propose to, Mr. Ballymolloy," answered John, internally amused at the solemn manner of his interlocutor.

"And then I will put the matter to you, Mr. Harrington, and indeed it's a plain matter, too, and not the least taste of dishonesty in it, at all. I've been thinking I'd make you senator if you'll agree to go against free trade, and that's just what I'll do, and no more."

"It is impossible for me to make such a

bargain, Mr. Ballymolloy. After your exposition of the importance of truth I am surprised that you should expect me to belie my whole political life. As I have told you, I am prepared to support laws to protect iron as much as is necessary. Free trade now-a-days does not mean cutting away all duties; it means a proper adjustment of them to the requirements of our commerce. A proper adjustment of duties could not possibly be interpreted to mean any injury to the iron trade. You may rely upon that, at all events."

"Oh, and I'm sure I can," said Ballymolloy incredulously, and he grew, if possible, redder in the face than nature and the action of alcohol had made him. "And I'm not only sure of it, but I'll swear it's gospel truth. But then, you know, I'm of opinion that by the time you've done reforming the other things, the reformed gentlemen won't like it, and then they'll just turn round and eat you up unless you reform us too, and that just means the ruin of us."

"Come now, Mr. Ballymolloy, that is exaggeration," said John. "If you will listen to me for a moment—"

"I haven't got the time, sir, and that's all about it. If you'll protect our interests and promise to do it, you'll be senator. The election is coming on, Mr. Harrington, and I'd be sorry to see you thrown out."

"Mr. Ballymolloy, I had sincerely hoped that you would support me in this matter, but I must tell you once more that I think you are unreasonable. I vouch for the sufficient protection of your interests, because it is the belief of our party that they need protection. But it is not necessary for you to have an anti-reform senator for that purpose, in the first place; and secondly, the offer of a seat in the Senate would never induce me to change my mind, nor to turn round and deny everything that I have said and written on the subject."

"Then that is your last word of all, Mr. Harrington?" said Ballymolloy, heaving his heavy body out of the easy-chair. But his voice, which had sounded somewhat irate during the discussion, again rolled out in mellifluous tones.

"Yes, Mr. Ballymolloy, that is all I have to say."

"And indeed it's not so very bad at all," said

Patrick. "You see I just wanted to see how far you were likely to go, because, though I'm a good Democrat, sir, I'm against free trade in the main points, and that's just the truth. But if you say you will stand up for iron right through, and use your best judgment, why, I guess you'll have to be senator after all. It's a great position, Mr. Harrington, and I hope you'll do honour to it."

"I hope so, indeed," said John. "Can I offer you a glass of wine, or anything else, Mr. Ballymolloy?"

"Indeed, and it's dirty weather, too," said Patrick. "Thank you, I'll take a little whiskey."

John poured out a glass.

"You won't let me drink alone, Mr. Harrington?" inquired Patrick, holding his tumbler in his hand. To oblige him, after the manner of the country, John poured out a small glass of sherry, and put his lips to it. Ballymolloy drained the whiskey to the last drop.

"You were not really thinking I would vote for Mr. Jobbins, were you now, Mr. Harrington?" he asked, with a sly look on his red face.

"I always hope that the men of my party are to be relied upon, Mr. Ballymolloy," said John, smiling politely.

"Very well, they are to be relied upon, sir. We are, every man of us, to the last drop of Christian blood in our blessed bodies," said Patrick, with a gush of patriotic enthusiasm, at the same time holding out his heavy hand. Then he took his leave.

"You had better have said 'to the last drop of Bourbon whiskey in the blessed bottle'!" said John to himself when his visitor was gone. Then he sat down for a while to think over the situation.

"That man will vote against me yet," he thought.

He was astonished to find himself nervous and excited for the first time in his life. With characteristic determination he went back to his desk, and continued the letter which the visit of the Irish elector had interrupted.

Meanwhile Mr. Patrick Ballymolloy was driven to the house of the Republican candidate, Mr. Jobbins.

CHAPTER IV.

SYBIL was right when she said the family politics at the Wyndhams' were disturbed. Indeed the disturbance was so great that Mrs. Wyndham was dressed and down-stairs before twelve o'clock, which had never before occurred in the memory of the oldest servant.

"It is too perfectly exciting, my dears," she exclaimed as Joe and Sybil entered the room, followed at a respectful distance by Ronald. "I can't stand it one minute longer! How do you do, Mr. Surbiton?"

"What is the latest news?" asked Sybil.

"I have not heard anything for ever so long. Sam has gone round to see—perhaps he will be back soon. I do wish we had 'tickers' here in the house, as they do in New York; it *is* such fun watching when anything is going on."

She walked about the room as she talked, touching a book on one table and a photograph on another, in a state of great excitement. Ronald watched her in some surprise; it seemed odd to him that any one should take so much interest in a mere election. Joe and Sybil, who knew her better, made themselves at home.

It appeared that although Sam had gone to make inquiries, it was very improbable that anything would be known until late in the afternoon. There was to be a contest of some sort, but whether it would end in a single day, or whether Ballymolloy and his men intended to prolong the struggle for their own ends, remained to be seen.

Meanwhile Mrs. Wyndham walked about her drawing-room descanting upon the iniquities of political life, with an animation that delighted Joe and amused Ronald.

"Well, there is nothing for it, you see," she said at last. "Sam evidently does not mean to come home, and you must just stay here and have some lunch until he does."

The three agreed, nothing loath to enjoying one another's company. There is nothing like

a day spent together in waiting for an event, to bring out the characteristics of individuals. Mrs. Wyndham fretted and talked, and fretted again. Joe grew silent, pale, and anxious as the morning passed, while Sybil and Ronald seemed to enjoy themselves extremely, and talked without ceasing. Outside the snow fell thick and fast as ever, and the drifts rose higher and higher.

"I do wish Sam would come back," exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham at last, as she threw herself into an easy-chair, and looked at the clock.

But Sam did not come, nevertheless, and Joe sat quietly by the fire, wishing she were alone, and yet unwilling to leave the house where she hoped to have the earliest information.

The two who seemed rapidly growing indifferent to the issue of the election were Sybil and Ronald, who sat together with a huge portfolio of photographs and sketches between them, laughing and talking pleasantly enough. Joe did not hear a word of their conversation, and Mrs. Wyndham paid little attention to it, though her practised ears could have heard it

all if need be, while she herself was profoundly occupied with some one else.

The four had a somewhat dreary meal together, and Ronald was told to go into Sam's study and smoke if he liked, while Mrs. Wyndham led Joe and Sybil away to look at a quantity of new things that had just come from Paris. Ronald did as he was bid and settled himself for an hour, with a plentiful supply of newspapers and railroad literature.

It was past three o'clock when Sam Wyndham entered the room, his face wet with the snowflakes and red with excitement.

"Hollo!" he exclaimed, seeing Ronald comfortably ensconced in his favourite easy-chair. "How are you?"

"Excuse me," said Ronald, rising quickly. "They told me to come in here after lunch, and so I was waiting until I was sent for, or told to come out."

"Very glad to see you, anyway," said Sam cordially. "Well, I have been to hear about an election—a friend of ours got put up for senator. But I don't expect that interests you much?"

"On the contrary," said Ronald, "I have heard it so much talked of that I am as much interested as anybody. Is it all over?"

"Oh yes, and a pretty queer business it was. Well, our friend is not elected, anyway—"

"Has Mr. Harrington been defeated?" asked Ronald quickly.

"It's my belief he has been sold," said Sam. "But as I am a Republican myself and a friend of Jobbins, more or less, I don't suppose I feel so very bad about it, after all. But I don't know how my wife will take it, I'm sure," added Sam presently. "I expect we had better go and tell her, right off."

"Then he has really lost the election?" inquired Ronald, who was not altogether sorry to hear it.

"Why, yes—as I say, Jobbins is senator now. I should not wonder if Harrington were a good deal cut up. Come along with me, now, and we will tell the ladies."

The three ladies were in the drawing-room. Mrs. Wyndham and Joe sprang to their feet as Sam and Ronald entered, but Sybil remained seated and merely looked up inquiringly.

"Oh now, Sam," cried Mrs. Wyndham, in great excitement, "tell us all about it right away. We are dying to know!"

Joe came close to Mrs. Wyndham, her face very pale and her teeth clenched in her great anxiety. Sam threw back the lappets of his coat, put his thumbs in the armholes of his broad waistcoat, and turned his head slightly on one side.

"Well," he said slowly, "John 's wiped out."

"Do you mean to say he has lost the election?" cried Mrs. Wyndham.

"Yes—he's lost it. Jobbins is senator."

"Sam, you are perfectly horrid!" exclaimed his spouse, in deepest vexation.

Josephine Thorn spoke no word, but turned away and went alone to the window. She was deathly pale, and she trembled from head to foot as she clutched the heavy curtain with her small white fingers.

"Poor Mr. Harrington!" said Sybil thoughtfully. "I am dreadfully sorry."

Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham and Ronald moved toward the fire where Sybil was sitting. No

one spoke for a few seconds. At last Mrs. Wyndham broke out:

"Sam, it's a perfect shame!" she said. "I think all those people ought to be locked up for bribery. I am certain it was all done by some horrid stealing, or something, now, was not it?"

"I don't know about that, my dear," said Sam reflectively. "You see they generally vote fair enough in these things. Well, may be that fellow Ballymolloy has made something out of it. He's a pretty bad sort of a scamp, any way, I expect. Sorry you are so put out about it, but Jobbins is not so very bad, after all."

Sybil suddenly missed Joe from the group, and looked across to where she stood by the window. A glance told her that something was wrong, and she rose from her seat and went to her friend. The sight of Josephine's pale face frightened her.

"Joe, dear," she said affectionately, "you are ill—come to my room." Sybil put one arm round her waist and quietly led her away. Ronald had watched the little scene from a distance, but Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham continued to discuss the result of the election.

"It is exactly like you, Sam, to be talking in that way, instead of telling me just how it happened," said Mrs. Wyndham. "And then to say it is not so very bad after all!"

"Oh, I will tell you all about it right away, my dear, if you'll only give me a little time. You're always in such an immense fever about everything, that it's perfectly impossible to get along."

"Are you going to begin?" said Mrs. Wyndham, half vexed with her husband's deliberate indifference.

"Well, as near as I can make out it was generally thought at the start that John had a pretty good show. The Senate elected him right away by a majority of four, which was so much to the good, for of course his friends reckoned on getting him in, if the Senate hadn't elected him, by the bigger majority of the House swamping the Senate in the General Court. But it's gone just the other way."

"Whatever is the General Court?" asked Ronald, much puzzled.

"Oh, the General Court is when the House and the Senate meet together next day to formally declare a senator elected, if they have

both chosen the same man, or to elect one by a general majority if they haven't."

"Yes, that is it," added Mrs. Wyndham to Ronald, and then addressing her husband, "Do go on, Sam; you've not told us anything yet."

"Well, as I said, the Senate elected John Harrington by a majority of four. The House took a long time getting to work, and then there was some mistake about the first vote, so they had to take a second. And when that was done Jobbins actually had a majority of eighteen. So John's beaten, and Jobbins will be senator anyhow, and you must just make the best you can out of it."

"But I thought you said when the House and the Senate did not agree, the General Court met next day and elected a senator?" asked Ronald again; "and in that case Mr. Harrington is not really beaten yet."

"Well, theoretically he's not," said Sam, "because of course Jobbins is not actually senator until he has been elected by the General Court, but the majority for him in the House was so surprisingly large, and the majority for John so small in the Senate, and the House is

so much larger than the Senate, that the vote to-morrow is a dead sure thing, and Jobbins is just as much senator as if he were sitting in Washington."

"I suppose you will expect me to have Mr. Jobbins to dinner, now. I think the whole business is perfectly mean!"

"Don't blame me, my dear," said Sam calmly. "I did not create the Massachusetts Legislature, and I did not found the State House, nor discover America, nor any of these things. And after all, Jobbins is a very respectable man and belongs to our own party, while Harrington does not. When I set up creating I'll make a note of one or two points, and I'll see that John is properly attended to."

"You need not be silly, Sam," said Mrs. Wyndham. "What has become of those girls?"

"They went out of the room some time ago," said Ronald, who had been listening with much amusement to the description of the election. He was never quite sure whether people could be serious when they talked such peculiar language, and he observed with surprise that Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham talked to each other

in phrases very different from those they used in addressing himself.

Sybil had led Joe away to her room. She did not guess the cause of Joe's faintness, but supposed it to be a momentary indisposition, amenable to the effects of eau-de-cologne. She made her lie upon the great cretonne sofa, moistening her forehead, and giving her a bottle of salts to smell.

But Joe, who had never been ill in her life, recovered her strength in a few minutes, and regaining her feet began to walk about the room.

"What do you think it was, Joe, dear?" asked Sybil, watching her.

"Oh, it was nothing. Perhaps the room was hot, and I was tired."

"I thought you looked tired all the morning," said Sybil, "and just when I looked at you I thought you were going to faint. You were as pale as death, and you seemed holding yourself up by the curtains."

"Did I?" said Joe, trying to laugh. "How silly of me! I felt faint for a moment—that was all. I think I will go home."

"Yes, dear—but stay a few minutes longer

and rest yourself. I will order a carriage—it is still snowing hard." Sybil left the room.

Once alone, Joe threw herself upon the sofa again. She would rather have died than have told any one, even Sybil Brandon, that it was no sickness she felt, but only a great and overwhelming disappointment for the man she loved.

Her love was doubly hers—her very own—in that it was fast locked in her own heart, beyond the reach of any human being to know. Of all that came and went about her, and flattered her, and strove for her graces, not one suspected that she loved a man in their very midst, passionately, fervently, with all the strength she had. Ronald's suspicions were too vague, and too much the result of a preconceived idea, to represent anything like a certainty to himself, and he had not mentioned them to her.

If anything can determine the passion of love in a woman it is the great flood of sympathy that overflows her heart when the man she loves is hurt, or overcome in a great cause. When, for a little moment, that which she thinks strongest and bravest and most manly is struck down and wounded and brought low,

her love rises up and is strong within her, and makes her more noble in the devotion of perfect gentleness than a man can ever be.

"Oh, if only he could have won!" Joe said again and again to herself. "If only he could have won, I would have given anything!"

Sybil came back in a few moments, and saw Joe lying down, still white and apparently far from well. She knelt upon the floor by her side, and taking her hands, looked affectionately into her face.

"There is something the matter," she said. "I know—you cannot deceive me—there is something serious the matter. Will you tell me, Joe? Can I do anything at all to help you?" Joe smiled faintly, grateful for the sympathy and for the gentle words of her friend.

"No, Sybil dear. It is nothing—there is nothing you can do. Thanks, dearest—I shall be very well in a little while. It is nothing, really. Is the carriage there?"

A few minutes later, Joe and Ronald were again at Miss Schenectady's house. Joe recovered her equanimity on the way, and asked

Ronald to come in, an invitation which he cheerfully accepted.

John Harrington had spent the day in a state of anxiety which was new to him. Enthusiastic by nature, he was calm by habit, and he was surprised to find his hand unsteady and his brain not capable of the intense application he could usually command. Ten minutes after the results of the election were known at the State House, he received a note from a friend informing him with expressions of hearty sympathy how the day had gone.

The strong physical sense of pain which accompanies all great disappointments, took hold of him, and he fell back in his seat and closed his eyes, his teeth set and his face pale with the suffering, while his broad hands convulsively grasped the heavy oaken arms of his chair.

It may be that this same bodily agony, which is of itself but the gross reflection in our material selves of what the soul is bearing, is a wholesome provision that draws our finer senses away from looking at what might blind them altogether. There are times when a man would go mad if his mind were not detached from its

sorrow by the quick sharp beating of his bodily heart, and by the keen torture of the physical body, that is like the thrusting of a red-hot knife between breast-bone and midriff.

The expression "self-control" is daily in the blatant mouths of preachers and moralists, the very cant of emptiness and folly. It means nothing, nor can any play of words or cunning twisting of conception ever give it meaning. For the "self" is the Divine, imperishable portion of the eternal God which is in man. I may control my limbs and the strength that is in them, and I may force under the appetites and passions of this mortal body, but I cannot control myself, for it is myself that controls, being of nature godlike and stronger than all which is material. And although, for an infinitely brief space of time, I myself may inhabit and give life to this handful of most changeable atoms, I have it in my supreme power and choice to make them act according to my pleasure. If I become enamoured of the body and its ways, and of the subtleties of a fleeting bodily intelligence, I have forgotten to control those things—and having forgotten

that I have free will given me from heaven to rule what is mine, I am no longer a man, but a beast. But while I, who am an immortal soul, command the perishable engine in which I dwell, I am in truth a man. For the soul is of God and for ever, whereas the body is a thing of to-day that vanishes into dust to-morrow; but the two together are the living man. And thus it is that God is made man in us every day.

All that which we know by our senses is but an illusion. What is true of its own nature, we can neither see, nor hear, nor feel, nor taste. It is a matter of time, and nothing more, and whatever palpable thing a man can name will inevitably be dissolved into its constituent parts, that these may again agglomerate into a new illusion for future ages. But that which is subject to no change, nor disintegration, nor reconstruction, is the immortal truth, to attain to a knowledge and understanding of which is to be saved from the endless shifting of the material and illusory universe.

John Harrington lay in his chair alone in his rooms, while the snow whirled against the windows outside and made little drifts on the sills.

The fire had gone out and the bitter storm beat against the casements and howled in the chimney, and the dusk of the night began to mingle with the thick white flakes, and brought upon the solitary man a great gloom and horror of loneliness. It seemed to him that his life was done, and his strength gone from him. He had laboured in vain for years, for this end, and he had failed to attain it. It were better to have died than to suffer the ignominy of this defeat. It were better never to have lived at all than to have lived so utterly in vain. One by one the struggles of the past came up to him; each had seemed a triumph when he was in the glory of strength and hope. The splendid aims of a higher and nobler government, built by sheer truth and nobility of purpose upon the ashes and dust of present corruption, the magnificent purity of the ideal State of which he had loved to dream—all that he had thought of and striven after as most worthy of a true man to follow, dwindled now away into a hollow and mocking image, more false than hollowness itself, poorer and of less substance than a juggler's show.

He clasped his hands over his forehead, and tried to think, but it was of no use. Everything

was vague, broken, crushed, and shapeless. Faces seemed to rise to his disturbed sight, and he wondered whether he had ever known these people; a ghastly weariness as of death was upon him, and his arms fell heavily by his sides. He groaned aloud, and if in that bitter sigh he could have breathed away his existence he would have gladly done it.

Some one entered the room, struck a match, and lit the gas. It was his servant, or rather the joint servant of two or three of the bachelors who lived in the house, a huge, smooth-faced coloured man.

"Oh, excuthe *me*, Mister Harrington, I thought you wath out, Thir. There's two o' them notes for you."

John roused himself, and took the letters without a word. They were both addressed in feminine handwriting. The one he knew, for it was from Mrs. Wyndham. The other he did not recognise. He opened Mrs. Wyndham's first.

"DEAR MR. HARRINGTON,—Sam and I are very much put out about it, and sympathise most cordially. We think you might like to come and dine this evening, if you have no

other invitation, so I write to say we will be all alone and very glad to see you.

"Cordially yours,

"JANE WYNDHAM.

"*P.S.*—Don't trouble about the answer."

John read the note through and laid it on the table. Then he turned the other missive over in his fingers, and finally tore open the envelope. It ran as follows :—

"MY DEAR MR. HARRINGTON,—Please don't be surprised at my writing to you in this way. I was at Mrs. Wyndham's this afternoon and heard all about it, and I must write to tell you that I am very, *very* sorry. It is too horrible to think how bad and wicked and foolish people are, and how they invariably do the wrong thing. I cannot tell you how sorry we all are, because it is just such men as you who are most needed nowadays, though of course I know nothing about politics here. But I am quite sure that all of them *will live to regret it*, and that you will win in the end. Don't think it foolish of me to write, because I'm so angry that I can't in the least help it, and I think everybody ought to.

"Yours in sincerity,

"JOSEPHINE THORN."

CHAPTER V.

JOHN read Joe's note many times over before he quite realised what it contained. It seemed at first a singular thing that she should have written to him, and he did not understand it. He knew her as an enthusiastic and capricious girl who had sometimes laughed at him, and sometimes treated him coldly—but who, again, had sometimes talked with him as though he were an old friend. He called to mind the interest she had taken in his doings of late, and how she had denounced Vancouver as his enemy, and he thought of the long conversation he had had with her on the ice under the cold moonlight. He thought of many a sympathetic glance she had given when he spoke of his aims and intentions, of many a gentle word spoken in praise of him, and which at the time he had

taken merely as so much small, good-natured flattery, such as agreeable people deal out to each other in society without any thought of evil nor any especial meaning of good. All these things came back to him, and he read the little note again. It was a kindly word, nothing more, penned by a wild, good-hearted girl, in the scorn of consequence or social propriety. It was nothing but that.

And yet, there was something more in it all—something not expressed in the abbreviated words and hurriedly-composed sentences, but something that seemed to struggle for expression. John's experience of womankind was limited, for he was no lady's man, and had led a life singularly lacking in woman's love or sentiment, though singularly dependent on the friendship of some woman. Nevertheless he knew that Joe's note breathed the essence of a sympathy wider than that of mere everyday acquaintance, and deeper, perhaps, than that of any friendship he had known. He could not have explained the feeling, nor reasoned upon it, but he knew well enough that when he next met Joe it would be on new terms. She had declared

herself his friend in a way no longer mistakable, for she must have followed her first impulse in writing such a note, and the impulse must have been a strong one.

For a while he debated whether to answer the note or not, almost forgetting his troubles in the tumult of new thoughts it had suggested to him. A note, thought he, required an answer, on general principles—but such a note as this would be better answered in person than by any pen and paper. He would call and see Joe, and thank her for it. But, again, he knew he could not see her until the next day, and that seemed a long time to wait. It would not have been long under ordinary circumstances, but in this case it seemed to him an unreasonable delay. He sat down and took a pen in his fingers.

"Dear Miss Thorn"—he began, and then stopped. In America it is more formal to begin without the preliminary "my"—in England the "my" is indispensable, unless people are on familiar terms. John knew this, and reflected that Joe was English. While he was reflecting his eye fell upon a heap of "telegraph blanks," and he remembered that he had not given notice

of his defeat to the council. He pushed aside the note paper and took a form for a cable dispatch. In a moment Joe was forgotten in the sudden shock that brought his thoughts back to his position. He wrote out a simple message, addressed to Z, who was the only one of the three whom he officially knew.

But when he had done that, he fell to thinking about Joe again, and resolved to write the note.

"MY DEAR MISS THORN,

"I cannot allow your very friendly words to remain unanswered until to-morrow. It is kind of you to be sorry for the defeat I have suffered, it is kinder still to express your sympathy so directly and so soon. Concerning the circumstances which brought the contest to such a result, I have nothing to say. It is the privilege of elective bodies to choose as they please, and indeed, that is the object of their existence. No one has any right to complain of not being elected, for a man who is a candidate knows from the first what he is undertaking, and what manner of men he has to deal with. Personally, I am a man who has fought a fight and has lost it, and however firmly I still believe in the cause which led me

to the struggle, I confess that I am disappointed and disheartened at being vanquished. You are good enough to say you believe I shall win in the end; I can only answer that I thank you very heartily indeed for saying so, though I do not think it is likely that any efforts of mine will be attended with success for a long time.

"Believe me, with great gratitude,

"Very sincerely yours,

"JOHN HARRINGTON."

It was a longer note than he had meant to write, in fact it was almost a letter; but he read it over and was convinced he had said what he meant to say, which was always the principal consideration in such matters. Accordingly the missive was dispatched to its destination. As for Mrs. Wyndham, John determined to accept her invitation, and to answer it in person by appearing at the dinner-hour. He would not let any one think he was so broken-hearted as to be unable to show himself. He was too strong for that, and he had too much pride in his strength.

He was right in going to Mrs. Wyndham's, for she and her husband were his oldest friends,

and he understood well enough what true hearts and what honest loyalty lie sometimes concealed in the bosoms of those brisk, peculiar people, who seem unable to speak seriously for long about the most serious subjects, and whose quaint turns of language seem often so unfit to express any deep feeling. But while he talked with his hosts his own thoughts strayed again and again to Joe, and he wondered what kind of woman she really was. He intended to visit her the next day.

The next day came, however, and yet John did not turn his steps up the hill towards Miss Schenectady's house. It was a cloudless morning after the heavy storm, and the great drifts of snow flashed like heaps of diamonds in the sun. All the air was clear and cold, and the red brick pavements were spotted here and there with white patches left from the shovels of the Irishmen. Sleighs of all sizes were ploughing their way hither and thither, breaking out a track in the heavy mass that encumbered the streets. Every one was wrapped in furs, and every one's face was red with the smarting cold.

Joe stayed at home until mid-day, when she went to a luncheon-party of young girls. As usual, they had been sewing for the poor, but Joe thought that she was not depriving the poor people of any very material assistance by staying away from the more industrious part of the entertainment. The sewing they all did together in a morning did not produce results whereby even the very smallest baby could have been clothed, and the part effected by each separate damsel in this whole was consequently somewhat insignificant. Joe would have stayed at home outright had the weather not been so magnificent, and possibly she thought that she might meet John Harrington on her way to the house of her friend in Dartmouth Street.

Fate, however, was against her, for she had not walked thirty yards down the hill before she was overtaken by Pocock Vancouver. He had been standing in one of the semicircular bay windows of the Somerset Club, and seeing Joe coming down the steep incline, had hurriedly taken his coat and hat and gone out in pursuit of her. Had he suspected in the

least how Joe felt toward him, he would have fled to the end of the world rather than meet her.

"Good morning, Miss Thorn," he said, walking rapidly by her side and taking off his hat, "how very early you are to-day."

"It is not early," said Joe, looking at him coldly, "it is nearly one o'clock."

"It would be called early for most people," said Vancouver; "for Mrs. Wyndham, for instance."

"I am not Mrs. Wyndham," said Joe.

"I am going to see Harrington," remarked Vancouver, who perceived that Joe was not in a good humour. "I am afraid he must be dreadfully cut up about this business."

"So you are going to condole with him? I do not believe he is in the least disturbed. He has far too much sense."

"I fancy the most sensible man in the world would be a trifle annoyed at being defeated in an election, Miss Thorn," said Vancouver, blandly. "I am afraid you are not very sorry for him. He is an old friend of mine, and though I differ from him in politics, very

passively, I cannot do less than go and see him, and tell him how much I regret, personally, that he should be defeated."

Joe's lip curled in scorn, and she flushed angrily. She could have struck Vancouver's pale face with infinite pleasure and satisfaction, but she said nothing in immediate answer.

"Do you not think I am right?" asked Vancouver. "I am sure you do; you have such a good heart." They passed Charles Street as he was speaking, and yet he gave no sign of leaving her.

"I am not sure that I have a good heart, and I am quite sure that you are utterly wrong, Mr. Vancouver," said Joe, in calm tones.

"Really? Why, you quite surprise me, Miss Thorn. Any man in my place ought—"

"Most men in your place would avoid Mr. Harrington," interrupted Joe, turning her clear brown eyes full upon him. Had she been less angry she would have been more cautious. But her blood was up, and she took no thought, but said what she meant, boldly.

"Indeed, Miss Thorn," said Vancouver, stiffly, "I do not understand you in the least. I think

what you say is very extraordinary. John Harrington has always been a friend of mine."

"That may be, Mr. Vancouver, but you are certainly no friend of his," said Joe, with a scornful laugh.

"You astonish me beyond measure," said Pocock, maintaining his air of injured virtue, although he inwardly felt that he was in some imminent danger. "How can you possibly say such a thing?"

Joe could bear it no longer. She was very imprudent, but her honest anger boiled over. She stopped in her walk, her back against the iron railings, and she faced Vancouver with a look that frightened him. He was forced to stop also, and he could not do less than return her glance.

"Do you dare to stand there and tell me that you are Mr. Harrington's friend?" she asked in low distinct tones. "You, the writer of articles in the *Daily Standard*, calling him a fool and a charlatan? You, who have done your very best to defeat him in this election? Indeed, it is too absurd!" She laughed aloud

in utter scorn, and then turned to continue her way.

Vancouver turned a shade paler than was natural with him, and looked down. He was very much frightened, for he was a coward.

"Miss Thorn," he said, "I am sorry you should believe such calumnies. I give you my word of honour that I have never either written or spoken against Mr. Harrington. He is one of my best friends."

Joe did not answer; she did not even look at him, but walked on in silence. He did not dare to speak again, and as they reached the corner of the public gardens he lifted his hat.

"I am quite sure that you will find you have misjudged me, Miss Thorn," he said, with a grieved look. "In the mean while I wish you a very good morning."

"Good morning," said Joe, without looking at him; and she passed on full of indignation and wrath.

To tell the truth, she was so much delighted at having spoken her mind for once, that she had not a thought of any possible consequences.

The delight of having dealt Vancouver such a buffet was very great, and she felt her heart beat fast with a triumphant pleasure.

But Vancouver turned and went away with a very unpleasant sensation in him. He wished with all his might that he had not left the comfortable bow window of the Somerset Club that morning, and more than all he wished he could ascertain how Joe had come to know of his journalistic doings. As a matter of fact, what she had said concerning Pocock's efforts against John in the election had been meant in a most general way. But Vancouver thought she was referring to his interview with Ballymolloy, and that she understood the whole matter. Of course, there was nothing to be done but to deny the accusations from beginning to end; but they nevertheless had struck deep, and he was thoroughly alarmed. When he left the club he had had no intention of going to see Harrington; the idea had formed itself while talking with her. But now, again, he felt that he could not go. He had not the courage to face the man he had injured, principally because he strongly suspected that if Joe knew

what he had done, John Harrington most likely knew it too.

He was doubly hit. He would have been less completely confused and frightened if the attack had come from Sybil Brandon; but he had had vague ideas of trying to marry Joe, and he guessed that any such plea was now hopelessly out of the question. He turned his steps homeward, uncertain what to do, and hoping to find counsel in solitude.

He took up the letters and papers that lay on his study table, brought by the mid-day post. One letter in particular attracted his attention, and he singled it out and opened it first. It was dated from London, and had been twelve days on its way.

"My dear Vancouver,

"Enclosed please find Bank of England Post Note for your usual quarterly honorarium, £1250. My firm will address you upon the use to be made of the Proxies lately sent you for the ensuing election of officers of the Pocahontas and Dead Man's Valley R.R., touching your possession of which I beg to reiterate the importance of a more than masonic discretion. I

apprehend that unless the scattered shares should have been quickly absorbed for the purpose of obtaining a majority, these Proxies will enable you to control the election of the proper ticket. If not, and if the Leviathan should decline the overtures that will be made to him during his summer visit to London, I should like your estimate of five thousand shares more to be picked up in the next three months, which will assure our friends the control. Should the prospective figure be too high, we may elect to sell out, after rigging the market for a boom.

"In either event there will be lots of pickings in the rise and fall of the shares for the old joint account, which has been so profitable because you have so skilfully covered up your tracks.

"Yours faithfully,

"SAUNDERS GRABBLES.

"*P.S.*—The expectations of the young lady about whom you inquire are involved in such a tangle of conditions as could only have occurred to the excited fancy of an old Anglo-Indian. He left about twenty lacs of rupees in various bonds—G. I. P. and others—to his nephew, Ronald Surbiton, and to his niece jointly, provided that they marry each other. If they do not, one quarter of the estate is to

go to the one who marries first, and the remaining three quarters to the other. The estate is in the hands of trustees, who pay an allowance to the heirs. In case they marry each other the said heirs have power to dispose by will of the inheritance. Otherwise the whole of it reverts to the last survivor, and at his or her death it is to be devoted to founding a home for superannuated governesses."

Vancouver read the letter through with care, and held it a moment in his hand. Then he crushed it angrily together and tossed it into the fire. It seemed as though everything went wrong with him to-day. Not only was no information concerning Joe of any use now; it would be a hard thing to disabuse her of the idea that he had written those articles. After all, though, when he thought the matter over, it could be only guess work. The manuscripts had always gone through the post, signed with a feigned name, and it was utterly impossible that the editor himself could know who had written them. It would be still more impossible, therefore, for any one else to do more than make a guess. It is easy to deny any statement, however

correct, when founded on such a basis. But there was the other thing: Joe had accused him of having opposed John's election to the best of his ability. No one could prove that either. He had even advised Ballymolloy to vote for John, in so many words. On the whole, his conscience was clear enough. Vancouver's conscience was represented by all those things which could by any possibility be found out; the things that no one could ever know gave him no anxiety. In the present case the first thing to be done was plainly to put the whole blame of the articles on the shoulders of some one else, a person of violent political views and very great vanity, who would be greatly flattered at being thought the author of anything so clever. That would not be a difficult task. He would broach the subject to Mrs. Wyndham, telling her that the man, whoever he should be, had told him in strictest confidence that he was the writer. Vancouver would of course tell it to Mrs. Wyndham as a state secret, and she would tell some one else—it would soon be public property, and Joe would hear of it. It would be easy enough to pitch

upon some individual who would not deny the imputation, or who would deny it in such a way as to leave the impression on the public mind unchanged, more especially as the articles had accomplished the desired result.

The prime cause of all this, John Harrington himself, sat in his room, unconscious, for the time, of Vancouver's existence. He was in a state of great depression and uncertainty, for he had not yet rallied from the blow of the defeat. Moreover he was thinking of Joe, and her letter lay open on the table beside him. His whole heart went out to her in thanks for her ready sympathy, and he had almost made up his mind to go and see her, as he had at first determined to do.

He would have laughed very heartily at the idea of being in love, for he had never thought of himself in such a position. But he realised that he was fond of Josephine Thorn, that he was thinking of her a great deal, and that the thought was a comfort to him in his distress. He knew very well that he would find a great rest and refreshment in talking to her at present, and yet he could not decide to go

to her. John was a man of calm manner and with plenty of hard, practical sense, in spite of the great enthusiasm that burned like a fire within him, and that was the mainspring of his existence. But like all orators and men much accustomed to dealing with the passions of others, he was full of quick intuitions and instincts which rarely betrayed him. Something warned him not to seek her society, and though he said to himself that he was very far from being in love, the thought that he might some day find that he wished to marry her presented itself continually to his mind; and since John had elected to devote himself to celibacy and politics, there was nothing more repugnant to his whole life than the idea of marriage.

At this juncture, while he was revolving in his mind what was best to be done, a telegram was brought to him. It was from Z, and in briefest terms of authority commanded John to hold himself ready to start for London at a moment's notice. It must have been dispatched within a few hours after receiving his own message of the night before, and considering

the difference of time, must have been sent from London early in the afternoon. It was clearly an urgent case, and the supreme three had work for John to do, even though he had not been made senator.

The order was a great relief. It solved all his uncertainty and scattered all his doubts to the wind. It gave him new courage and stimulated his curiosity. Z had only sent for him twice before, and then only to call him from Boston or New York to Washington. It was clear that something of very great importance was likely to occur. His energy returned in full, with the anticipation of work to do and of a journey to be made, and before night he was fully prepared to leave on receipt of his orders. His box was packed, and he had drawn the money necessary to take him to London.

As for Joe, he could go and see her now if he pleased. In twenty-four hours he might be gone, never to see her again. But it was too late on that day—he would go on the following morning.

It was still the height of the Boston season, which is short, but merry while it lasts. John

had a dinner-party, a musical evening, and a ball on his list for the evening, and he resolved that he would go to all three, and show himself bravely to the world. He was full of new courage and strength since he had received Z's message, and he was determined that no one should know what he had suffered.

The dinner passed pleasantly enough, and by ten o'clock he was at the musical party. There he found the Wyndhams and many other friends, but he looked in vain for Joe; she was not there. Before midnight he was at the dance, pushing his way through crowds of acquaintances, stumbling over loving couples ensconced on the landings of the stairs, and running against forlorn old ladies, whose mouths were full of ice-cream and their hearts of bitterness against the younger generation; and so, at last, he reached the ball-room, where everything that was youngest and most fresh was assembled, swaying and gliding, and backing and turning in the easy, graceful half-walk, half-slide of the Boston step.

As John stood looking on Joe passed him, leaving the room on Mr. Topeka's arm. There

was a little open space before her in the crowd, and Pocock Vancouver darted out with the evident intention of speaking to her. But as she caught sight of him she turned suddenly away, pulling Mr. Topeka round by his arm. It was an extremely "marked thing to do." As she turned she unexpectedly came face to face with John, who had watched the manœuvre. The colour came quickly to her face, and she was slightly embarrassed; nevertheless she held out her hand and greeted John cordially.

CHAPTER VI.

"I AM so glad to have found you," said John to Josephine, when the latter had disposed of Mr. Topeka. They had chosen a quiet corner in a dimly-lighted room away from the dancers. "But I suppose it is useless to ask you for a dance?"

"No," said Joe, looking at her card; "I always leave two dances free in the middle of the evening in case I am tired. We will sit them out."

"Thank you," said John, looking at her. She looked pale and a little tired, but wonderfully lovely. "Thank you," he repeated, "and thank you also for your most kind note."

"I wish I could tell you better how very sorry I am," said Joe, impulsively. "It is bad enough to look on and see such things

done, but I should think you must be nearly distracted."

"I think I was at first," said John, simply. "But one soon grows used to it. Man is a vain animal, and I suppose no one could lose a fight as I have without being disappointed."

"If you were not disappointed it would be a sign you did not really care," answered Joe. "And of course you must care—a great, great deal. It is a loss to your cause, as well as a loss to yourself. But you cannot possibly give it up—you will win next time."

"Yes," said John, "I hope I shall win some day." But his voice sounded uncertain; it lacked that determined ring that Joe loved so well. She felt as she sat beside him that he was deeply hurt and needed fresh encouragement and strength to restore him to his old self. She longed to help him and to rouse him once more to the consciousness of power and the hope of victory.

"It is my experience," said she with an air of superiority that would have been amusing if she had spoken less earnestly—"it is my experience that one should never think of

anything in which one has come to grief. I know, when one is going at a big thing—a double post and rails with a ditch, or anything like that, you know—it would never do to remember that you have come off at the same thing or at something else before. When a man is always remembering his last tumble he has lost his nerve, and had better give up hunting altogether. Thinking that you may get an ugly fall will not help you over anything."

"No," said John, "that is very true."

"You must forget all about it and begin again. You have missed one bird, but you are a good shot, and you will not miss the next."

"You are a most encouraging person, Miss Thorn," said John with a faint smile. "But you know the only test of a good shot is that one hits the mark. I have missed at the first trial, and that is no reason why I should not miss at the second, too."

"You are disappointed and unhappy now," said Joe, gently. "It is very natural indeed. Anybody would feel like that. But you must not believe in yourself any less than your friends believe in you."

"I fancy my friends do not all think alike," answered John. "But I am grateful to you for what you say."

He was indeed grateful, and the soothing sound of her gentle voice was the best refreshment for his troubled spirit. He thought for a moment how brave a man could be with such a woman by his side; and the thought pleased him, the more because he knew that it could not be realised. They sat in silence for a while, contented to be together, and in sympathy. But before long the anxiety for the future and the sense of his peculiar position came over John again.

"Do you know," he said, "there are times when I regret it all very much? I never told any one so before—perhaps I was never so sure of it as I have been since this affair."

"What is that you regret so much?" asked Joe, softly. "It is a noble life."

"It is indeed, if only a man knows how to live it," answered John. "But sometimes I think I do not. You once said a very true thing to me about it all. Do you remember?"

"No; what was it?"

"You said I should not succeed because I am not enough of a partisan, and because every one is a partisan here."

"Did I? Yes, I remember saying it," answered Joe, secretly pleased that he should not have forgotten it. "I do not think it is so very true, after all. It is true to-day; but it is for men like you to set things right, to make partisanship a thing of the past. Men ought to make laws because they are just and necessary, not in order that they may profit by them at the expense of the rest of the world. And to have such good laws men ought to choose good men to represent them."

"There is no denying the truth of that," said John. "That is the way to construct the ideal republic. It would be the way to do a great many ideal things. You need only persuade humanity to do right, and humanity will do it. Verily, it is an easy task!" he laughed, a little bitterly.

"It is not like you to laugh in that way," said Joe, gravely.

"No; to tell the truth, I am not overmuch inclined to laugh at anything to-day, excepting

myself, and I dare say there are plenty of people who will do that for me without the asking. They will have no chance when I am gone."

Joe started slightly.

"Gone?" she repeated. "Are you going away?"

"It is very likely," said John. "A friend of mine has warned me to be ready to start at a moment's notice on very important business."

"But it is uncertain, then?" asked Joe, quickly. She had turned very white in an instant, and she looked straight across the little room and pulled nervously at her fan. She would not have dared to let her eyes meet John's at that moment.

"Yes, rather uncertain," answered John. "But he would not have sent me such a warning unless it were very likely that he would really want me."

Joe was silent; she could not speak.

"So you see," continued Harrington, "I may leave to-morrow, and I cannot tell when I may come back. That is the reason I was glad to

find you here. I would have called to-day, if it had been possible, after I got the message." He spoke calmly, not dreaming of the storm of fear and passion he was rousing in the heart of the fair girl beside him.

"Where—where are you going?" asked Joe in a low voice.

"Probably to England," said John.

Before the words were out of his mouth he turned and looked at her, suddenly realising the change in her tones. But she had turned away from him. He could see the quiver of her lips and the beating throb of her beautiful throat; and as he watched the outline of her cheek a single tear stole slowly over the delicate skin, and trembled, and fell upon her white neck. But still she looked away.

Ah, John Harrington, what have you done? You have taken the most precious and pure thing in this world, the thing men as brave as you have given their heart's best blood to win and have perished for failing, the thing which angels guard and Heaven has in its keeping—the love of a good and noble woman. It has come into your hands and you do not

want it. You hardly know it is yours; and if you fully knew it you would not know what to do!

You are innocent, indeed; you have done nothing, spoken no word, given no look that, in your opinion, your cold indifferent opinion, could attract a woman's love. But the harm is done, nevertheless, and a great harm too. When you are old and sensible you will look back to this day as one of sorrow and evil, and you will know then that all greatness and power and glory of realised ambition are nothing unless a man have a woman's love. You will know that a man who cannot love is blind to half the world he seeks to conquer, and that a man who cannot love truly is no true man, for he who is not true to one cannot be true to many. That is the sum and reckoning of what love is worth.

But John knew of nothing beyond friendship, and he could not conceive how friendship could turn into anything else. When he saw the tear on Josephine Thorn's cheek he was greatly disturbed, and vaguely wondered what in the world he should do. The idea that any woman

could care enough for him to shed a tear when he left her had never crossed his mind; even now, with the actual fact before his eyes, he doubted whether it were possible. She was ill, perhaps, and suffering pain. Pshaw! it was absurd, it could not be that she cared so much for him.

Seeing she did not move, he sat quite still for a while. His usual tact had deserted him in the extremity of the situation. He revolved in his mind what was best to say. It was safest to suppose that Joe was ill, but he would say something indifferent, in order to see whether she recovered, before he suggested that he might be of assistance.

"It is cold here," he remarked, trying to speak as naturally as possible. "Would you not like to take a turn, Miss Thorn?"

Joe moved a little. She was deadly pale, and in the effort she had made to control her feelings she was unconscious of the tears in her eyes.

"Oh no, thanks," she faltered, "I will not dance just now." She could not say more.

John made up his mind.

He is what you hope to be at his age. He must be very old."

"Yes, he is old. As for his representing my ideal, I think he approaches more nearly to it than any man alive. But you would probably not like him."

"Why?"

"He belongs to a class of men whom old-world people especially dislike," answered John. "He does not believe in any monarchy, aristocracy, or distinction of birth. He looks upon titles as a decaying institution of barbarous ages, and he confidently asserts that in two or three generations the republic will be the only form of social contract known amongst the inhabitants of the civilised world."

John was watching Joe while he spoke. He was merely talking because it seemed necessary, and he saw that in spite of her assumed calm she was still greatly agitated. She seemed anxious, however, to continue the conversation.

"It is absurd," said she, "to say that all men are born equal."

"Everything depends on what you mean by the word 'equal.' I mean by it that all men

are born with an equal claim to a share in all the essential rights of free citizenship. When a man demands more than that, he is infringing on the rights of others; when he is content with less, he is allowing himself to be robbed."

"But who is to decide just how much belongs to each man?" asked Joe, leaning back wearily against the cushions. She wished now that she had allowed him to call her aunt. It was a fearful strain on her faculties to continue talking upon general subjects and listening to John Harrington's calm, almost indifferent, tones.

"The majority decides that," said John.

"But a majority has just decided that you are not to be senator," said Joe. "According to you they were right, were they not?"

"It is necessary that the majority should be free," said John, "and that they should judge of themselves, each man according to his honest belief. Majorities with us are very frequently produced by a handful of dishonest men, who can turn the scale on either side, to suit their private ends. It is the aim we set before us to

protect the freedom of majorities. That is the true doctrine of a republic."

"And for that aim," said Joe, slowly, "you would sacrifice everything?"

"Yes, indeed we would," said John, gravely. "For that end we will sacrifice all that we have to give—the care for personal satisfaction, the hope of personal distinction, the peace of a home and the love of a wife. We seek neither distinction nor satisfaction, and we renounce all ties that could hamper our strength or interfere with the persevering and undivided attention we try to give to our work."

"That is a magnificent programme," said Joe, somewhat incredulously. "Do you not think it is possible sometimes to aim too high? You say 'we seek,' 'we try,' as though there were several of you, or at least, some one besides yourself. Do you believe that such ideas as you tell me of are really and seriously held by any body of men?"

Nothing had seemed too high to Josephine an hour earlier, nothing too exalted, nothing so noble but that John Harrington might do it, then and there. But a sudden change had

come over her, the deadly cold phase of half-melancholy unbelief that often follows close upon an unexpected disappointment, so that she looked with distaste on anything that seemed so full of the enthusiasm she had lost. The tears that had risen so passionately to her dimmed eyes were suddenly frozen, and seemed to flow back with chilling force to her heart. She coldly asked herself whether she were mad that she could have suffered thus for such a man, even ever so briefly. He was a man, she said, who loved an unattainable, fanatic idea in the first place, and who dearly loved himself as well for his own fanaticism's sake. He was a man in whom the heart was crushed, even annihilated, by his intellect, which he valued far too highly, and by his vanity, which he dignified into a philosophy of self-sacrifice. He was aiming at what no man can reach, and though he knew his object to be beyond human grasp he desired all possible credit for having madly dreamed of anything so high. In the sudden revulsion of her strong passion, she almost hated him, she almost felt the power to refute his theories, to destroy his edifice of fantastic

morality, and finally to show him that he was a fool among men, and doubly a fool, because he was not even happy in his own folly.

Joe vaguely felt all this, and with it she felt a sense of shame at having so nearly broken down at the news that he was going away. He had thought she was ill; most assuredly he could not have guessed the cause of what he had seen; but nevertheless she had suffered a keen pain, and the tears had come to her eyes. She did not understand it. He might leave her now, if he pleased, and she would not care; indeed, it would be rather a relief if he would go. She no longer asked what she was to him, she simply reflected that, after all was said, he was nothing to her. She felt a quick antagonism to his ideas, to his words, and to himself, and she was willing to show it. She asked him incredulously whether his ideas were really held by others.

"It makes little difference," answered John, "whether they are many or few who think as I do, and I cannot tell how many there may be. The truth is not made truth because many people believe it. The world went round, as

Galileo knew, although he alone stood up and said it in the face of mankind, who scoffed at him for his pains."

"In other words, you occupy the position of Galileo," suggested Joe, calmly.

"Not I," said John; "but there are men, and there have been men, in our country who know truths as great as any he discovered, and who have spent their lives in proclaiming them. I *know* that they are right, and that I am right, and that, however we may fail, others will succeed at last. I know that, come what may, honour and truth and justice will win the day in the end!" His grey eyes glittered as he spoke, and his broad white hands clasped nervously together in his enthusiasm. He was depressed and heartsick at his failure, but it needed only one word of opposition to rouse the strong main thought of his life into the most active expression. But Joe sat coldly by, her whole nature seemingly changed in the few minutes that had passed.

"And all this will be brought about by the measures you advocated the other day," said she with a little laugh. "A civil service, a

little tariff reform — that is enough to inaugurate the reign of honour, truth, and justice?"

John turned his keen eyes upon hers. He had begun talking because she had required it of him, and he had been roused by the subject. He remembered the sympathy she had given him, and he was annoyed at her caprice.

"Such things are the mere passing needs of a time," he said. "The truth, justice, and honour, at which you are pleased to be amused, would insure the execution at all times of what is right and needful. Without a foundation composed of the said truth, justice, and honour, to get what is right and needful is often a matter so stupendous that the half of a nation's blood is drained in accomplishing the task, if even it is accomplished after all. I see nothing to laugh at."

Indeed, Joe was only smiling faintly, but John was so deeply impressed and penetrated by the absolute truth of what he was saying, that he had altogether ceased to make any allowances for Joe's caprice of mood or for the disturbance in her manner that he had so

lately witnessed. He was beginning to be angry, and she had never seen him in such a mood.

"The world would be a very nice tiresome place to live in," she said, "if every one always did exactly what is absolutely right. I should not like to live among people who would be always so entirely padded and lined with goodness as they must be in your ideal republic."

"It is a favourite and characteristic notion of modern society to associate goodness with dulness, and consequently, I suppose, to connect badness with all that is gay, interesting, and diverting. There is nothing more perverted, absurd, and contemptible than that notion in the whole history of the world."

John was not gentle with an idea when he despised it, and the adjectives fell in his clear utterance like the blows of a sledge-hammer. But as the idea he was abusing had been suggested by Joe, she resented the strong language.

"I am flattered that you should call anything I say by such bad names," she said. "I am not good at arguing and that sort of thing. If I

were I think I could answer you very easily. Will you please take me back to my aunt?" She rose in a somewhat stately fashion.

John was suddenly aware that he had talked too much and too strongly, and he was very sorry to have displeased her. She had always let him talk as he pleased, especially of late, and she had almost invariably agreed with him in everything he said, so that he had acquired too much confidence. At all events, that was the way he explained to himself the present difficulty.

"Please forgive me, Miss Thorn," he said humbly, as he gave her his arm to leave the room. "I am a very sanguine person, and I often talk great nonsense. Please do not be angry." Joe paused just as they reached the door.

"Angry? I am not angry," she said with sudden gentleness. "Besides, you know, this is—you are really going away?"

"I think so," said John.

"Then, if you do," she said with some hesitation—"if you do, this is good-bye, is it not?"

"Yes, I am afraid it is," said John; "but not for long."

"Not for long, perhaps," she answered; "but I would not like you to think I was angry the very last time I saw you."

"No, indeed. I should be very sorry if you were. But you are not?"

"No. Well then—" she held out her hand—"Good-bye, then." She had almost hated him a few minutes ago. Half-an-hour earlier she had loved him. Now her voice faltered a little, but her face was calm.

John took the proffered hand and grasped it warmly. With all her caprice, and despite the strange changes of her manner toward him, she had been a good friend in a bad time during the last days, and he was more sorry to leave her than he would himself have believed.

"Good-bye," he said, "and thank you once more, with all my heart, for your friendship and kindness." Their hands remained clasped for a moment; then she took his arm again, and he led her out of the dimly-lighted sitting-room back among the brilliant dancers, and the noise and the music and the whirling crowd.

CHAPTER VII.

A CHANGE has come over Boston in four months, since John Harrington and Josephine Thorn parted. The breath of the spring has been busy everywhere, and the haze of the hot summer is ripening the buds that the spring has brought out. The trees on the common are thick and heavy with foliage, the public garden is a carpet of bright flowers, and on the walls of Beacon Street the great creepers have burst into blossom and are stretching long shoots over the brown stone and the iron balconies. There is a smell of violets and flowers in the warm air, and down on the little pond the swan-shaped boats are paddling about with their cargoes of merry children and calico nursery-maids, while the Irish boys look on from the banks and throw pebbles when the

policemen are not looking, wishing they had the spare coin necessary to embark for a ten minutes' voyage on the mimic sea. Unfamiliar figures wander through the streets of the West End, and more than half the houses show by the boarded windows and doors that the owners are out of town.

The migration of the "tax-dodgers" took place on the last day of April; they will return on the second day of December, having spent just six months and one day in their country places, whereby they have shifted the paying of a large proportion of their taxes to more economical regions. It is a very equitable arrangement, for it is only the rich man who can save money in this way, while his poorer neighbour, who has no country seat to which he may escape, must pay to the uttermost farthing. The system stimulates the impecunious to become wealthy and helps the rich to become richer. It is, therefore, perfectly good and just.

But Boston is more beautiful in the absence of the "tax-dodger" than at any other season. There is a stillness and a peace over the fair

city that one may long for in vain during the winter. Business indeed goes on without interruption, but the habitation of the great men of business knows them not. They come up from their cool bowers by the sea, in special trains, in steamers, and in yachts, every morning, and early in the afternoon they go back, so that all day long the broad streets at the west are quiet and deserted, and seem to be basking in the sunshine to recover from the combined strain of the bitter winter and the unceasing gaiety that accompanies it.

In the warm June weather Miss Schenectady and Joe still linger in town. The old lady has no new-fangled notions about taxes, and though she is rich and has a pretty place near Newport, she will not go there until she is ready, no, not for all the tax-gatherers in Massachusetts. As for Joe, she does not want to go away. Urgent letters come by every mail entreating her to return to England in time for a taste of the season in London, but they lie unanswered on her table, and often she does not read more than half of what they contain. The books and the letters accumulate in her room, and she

takes no thought whether she reads them or not, for the time is weary on her and she only wishes it gone, no matter how. Nevertheless she will not go home, and she even begs her aunt not to leave Boston yet.

She is paler than she was and her face looks thin. She says she is well and as strong as ever, but the elasticity is gone from her step and the light has faded in her brown eyes, so that one might meet her in the street and hardly know her. As she sits by the window, behind the closed blinds, the softened light falls on her face, and it is sad and weary.

It was not until John Harrington was gone that she realised all. He had received the message he expected early on the morning after that memorable parting, and before mid-day he was on his way. Since then she had heard no word of tidings concerning him, save that she knew he had arrived in England. For anything she knew he might even now be in America again, but she would not believe it. If he had come back he would surely have come to see her, she thought. There were times when she would have given all the world to look on his

face again, but for the most part she said to herself it was far better that she should never see him. Where was the use?

Joe was not of the women who have intimate *confidantes* and can get rid of much sorrow by much talking about it. She was too proud and too strong to ask for help or sympathy in any real distress. She had gone to Sybil Brandon when she was about to tell Ronald of her decision, because she thought that Sybil would be kind to him and help him to forget the past; but where she herself was alone concerned, she would rather have died many deaths than confess what was in her heart.

She had gone bravely through the remainder of the season, until all was over, and no one had guessed her disappointment. Such perfect physical strength as hers was not to be broken down by the effort of a few weeks, and still she smiled and talked and danced and kept her secret. But as the long months crawled out their tale of dreary days the passion in her soul spread out great roots and grew fiercely against the will that strove to break it down. It was a love against which there was no appeal, which

had taken possession silently and stealthily, with no outward show of wooing or sweet words; and then, safe within the fortress of her maidenly soul, it had grown up to a towering strength, feeding upon her whole life, and ruthlessly dealing with her as it would. But this love sought no confidence, nor help, nor assistance, being of itself utterly without hope, strong and despairing.

One satisfaction only she had daily. She rejoiced that she had broken away from the old ties, from Ronald and from her English life. To have found herself positively loving one man while she was betrothed to another would have driven her to terrible extremity; the mere idea of going back to her mother and to the old life at home with this wild thought for ever gnawing at her heart was intolerable. She might bear it to the end, whatever the end might be, and in silence, so long as none of her former associations made the contrast between past and present too strong. Old Miss Schenectady, with her books and her odd conversation, was as good a companion as any one, since she could not live alone. Sybil Brandon

would have wearied her by her sympathy, gentle and loving as it would have been; and besides, Sybil was away from Boston and very happy—it would be unkind, as well as foolish, to disturb her serenity with useless confidences. And so the days went by and the hot summer was come, and yet Joe lingered in Boston, suffering silently and sometimes wondering how it would all end.

Sybil was staying near Newport with her only surviving relation, an uncle of her mother. He was an old man, upwards of eighty years of age, and he lived in a strange old place six or seven miles from the town. But Ronald had been there more than once, and he was always enthusiastic in his description of what he had seen, and he seemed particularly anxious that Joe should know how very happy Sybil was in her country surroundings. Ronald had travelled during the spring, making short journeys in every direction, and constantly talking of going out to see the West, a feat which he never accomplished. He would go away for a week at a time and then suddenly appear again, and at last had gravitated to

Newport. Thence he came to town occasionally and visited Joe, never remaining more than a day, and sometimes only a few hours. Joe was indifferent to his comings and goings, but always welcomed him in a friendly way. She saw that he was amusing himself, and was more glad than ever that the relations formerly existing between them had been so opportunely broken off. He had never referred to the past since the final interview when Joe had answered him by bursting into tears, and he talked about the present cheerfully enough.

One morning he arrived without warning, as usual, to make one of his short visits. Joe was sitting by the window dressed all in white, and the uniform absence of colour in her dress rather exaggerated the pallor of her face than masked it. She was reading, apparently with some interest, in a book of which the dark-lined binding sufficiently declared the sober contents. As she read, her brows bent in the effort of understanding, while the warm breeze that blew through the blinds fanned her tired face and gently stirred the small stray ringlets

of her soft brown hair. Ronald opened the door and entered.

"Oh, Ronald!" exclaimed Joe, starting a little nervously, "have you come up? You look like the sunshine. Come in, and shut the door." He did as he was bidden, and came and sat beside her.

"Yes, I have come up for the day. How are you, Joe dear? You look pale. It is this beastly heat — you ought to come down to Newport for a month. It is utterly idiotic, you know, staying in town in this weather."

"I like it," said Joe. "I like the heat so much that I think I should be cold in Newport. Tell me all about what you have been doing."

"Oh, I hardly know," said Ronald. "Lots of things."

"Tell me what you do in one day—yesterday, for instance. I want to be amused this morning."

"It is not so very amusing, you know, but it is very jolly," answered Ronald. "To begin with, I get up at unholy hours and go and bathe in the surf at the second beach. There

are no end of a lot of people there even at that hour."

"Yes, I dare say. And then?"

"Oh, then I go home and dress; and later, if I do not ride, I go to the club—casino, I beg its pardon!—and play tennis. They play very decently, some of those fellows."

"Are there any nice rides?"

"Just along the roads, you know. But when you get out to Sherwood there are meadows and things—with a brook. That is very fair."

"Do you still go to Sherwood often? How is Sybil?"

"Yes," said Ronald, and a blush rose quickly to his face, "I often go there. It is such a queer old place, you know, full of trees and old summer-houses and graveyards — awfully funny."

"Tell me, Ronald," said Joe, insisting a little, "how is Sybil?"

"She looks very well, so I suppose she is. But she never goes to anything in Newport; she has not been in the town at all yet, since she went to stay with her uncle."

"But of course lots of people go out to see her, do they not?"

"Oh, well, not many. In fact I do not remember to have met any one there," answered Ronald, as though he were trying to recall some face besides Miss Brandon's. "Her uncle is such an odd bird, you have no idea."

"I do not imagine you see very much of him when you go out there," said Joe, with a faint laugh.

"Oh, I always see him, of course," said Ronald, blushing again. "He is about a hundred years old, and wears all kinds of clothes, and wanders about the garden perpetually. But I do not talk to him unless I am driven to it——"

"Which does not occur often," interrupted Joe.

"Oh, well, I suppose not very often. Why should it?"

Ronald was visibly embarrassed. Joe watched him with a look of amusement on her face; but affectionately, too, as though what he said pleased her as well as amused her. There was a short pause, during which Ronald rubbed his

hat slowly and gently. Then he looked up suddenly and met Joe's eyes; but he turned away again instantly, blushing redder than ever.

"Ronald," Joe said, presently, "I am so glad."

"Glad? Why? About what?"

"I am glad that you like her, and that she likes you. I think you like her very much, Ronald."

"Oh yes, very much," repeated Ronald, trying to seem indifferent.

"Do you not feel as though we were much more like brother and sister now?" asked Joe, after a little while.

"Oh, much!" assented Ronald. "I suppose it is better, too, though I did not think so at first."

"It is far better," said Joe, laying her small, thin hand across her cousin's strong fingers and pressing them a little. "You are free now, and you will probably be very happy before long. Do you not think so?" she asked, looking affectionately into his eyes.

"I hope so," said Ronald, with a last attempt at indifference. Then suddenly his face softened,

and he added in a gentler tone, "Indeed, Joe, I think I shall be very happy soon."

"I am so glad," said Joe again, still holding his hand, but leaning her head back wearily in the deep chair. "There is only one thing that troubles me."

"What is that?"

"That horrid will," said Joe. "I am sure we could get it altered in some way."

"We never thought about it before, Joe. Why should we think about it now? It seems to me it is a very good will as things have turned out."

"But, my dear boy," said Joe, "if you are married to Sybil Brandon, you will need ever so much money."

Ronald blushed again.

"I have not asked her to marry me," he said quickly.

"That makes no difference at all," replied Joe. "As I was saying, when you have married her you will need money."

"What an idea!" exclaimed Ronald, indignantly. "As if any one wanted to be rich in order to be happy. Besides, between what I

have of my own, and my share of the money, there is nearly four thousand a-year; and then there is the place in Lanarkshire for us to live in. As if that were not enough!"

"It is not so very much, though," said Joe, reflecting. "I do not think Sybil has anything at all. You will be as poor as two little church mice; but I will come and stay with you sometimes," Joe added, laughing, "and help you about the bills."

"The bills would take care of themselves," said Ronald, gravely. "They always do. But whatever happens, Joe, my home is always yours. You will always remember that, will you not?"

"Dear Ronald," answered his cousin affectionately, "you are as good as it is possible to be—you really are."

"Ronald," said Joe, after a pause, "I have an idea."

He looked at her inquiringly, but said nothing.

"I might," she continued, smiling at the thought—"I may go and marry first, you know, after all, and spoil it."

"But you will not, will you? Promise me you will not."

"I wish I could," said Joe, "and then you could have the money—"

"But I would not let you," interrupted Ronald. "I would go off and get married by license, and that sort of thing."

"Without asking Miss Brandon?" suggested Joe.

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Ronald, colouring for the twentieth time.

"I think we are talking nonsense altogether," said Joe, seriously. "I do not think, indeed I am quite sure, I shall never marry."

"How absurd!" cried Ronald. "The idea of your not marrying. It is perfectly ridiculous."

The name of John Harrington was on his lips, but he checked himself. John was gone abroad, and with more than usual tact, Ronald reflected that, if Joe had really cared for the man, an allusion to him would be unkind. But Joe only shook her head, and let her cousin's words pass unanswered.

She had long suspected, from Ronald's frequent allusions to Sybil, which were generally

accompanied by some change of manner, that he was either already in love with the fair American girl, or that he soon would be, and the acknowledgment she had now received from himself gave her infinite pleasure. In her reflections upon her own conduct she had never blamed herself, but she had more than once thought that he was greatly to be pitied. To have married him six months ago, when she was fully conscious that she did not love him, would have been very wrong; and to have gone back at a later period, when she realised that her whole life was full of her love for John Harrington, would have been a crime. But in spite of that she was often very sorry for Ronald, and feared that she had hurt his happiness past curing. Now, therefore, when she saw how much he loved another, she was exceedingly glad, for she knew that the thing she had done had been wholly good, both for him and for her.

They soon began to talk of other things, but the conversation fell back to the discussion of Newport, and Joe learned with some surprise that Pocock Vancouver assiduously cultivated

Ronald's acquaintance, and was always ready to do anything in the world that Ronald desired. It appeared that Vancouver lent Ronald his horses at all times, and was apparently delighted when Ronald would take a mount and stay away all day. The young Englishman of course was not loath to accept such offers, having a radical and undisguised contempt for hired horseflesh, and as Sybil lived several miles out of town, it was far the most pleasant plan to ride out to her, and after spending the day there, to ride back in the evening, more especially as it cost him nothing.

Joe was on the point of making some remark upon Vancouver, which would very likely have had the effect of cooling the intimacy between him and Ronald; but she thought better of it, and said nothing. Ronald had had no part in all the questions connected with John's election, and knew nothing of what Vancouver had done in the matter. It was better on many grounds not to stir up fresh trouble, and so long as Vancouver's stables afforded Ronald an easy and economical means of locomotion from Newport to the house of the woman he loved,

the friendship that had sprung up was a positive gain. She could not understand the motives that prompted Vancouver in the least. He had made more than one attempt to regain his position with her after the direct cut he had sustained on the evening when she parted with John; but Joe had resolutely set her face against him. Possibly she thought Vancouver might hope to regain her good opinion by a regular system of kindness to Ronald; but it hardly seemed to her as though such a result would reward him for the pains of his diplomacy. Meanwhile it would be foolish of her to interfere with any intimacy which was of real use to Ronald in his suit.

As a matter of fact, Vancouver was carrying out a deliberate plan, and one which was far from ill-conceived. He had not been so blind as not to suspect Joe's secret attachment for John, when she was willing to go to such lengths in her indignation against himself for being John's enemy. But he had disposed of John, as he thought, by assisting, if not actually causing, his defeat. He imagined that Harrington had gone abroad to conceal the mortification

he felt at having lost the election, and he rightly argued that for some time Joe would not bestow a glance upon any one else. In the mean time, however, he was in possession of certain details concerning Joe's fortune which could be of use, and he accordingly set about encouraging Ronald's affections in any direction they might take, so long as they were not set upon his cousin. He was not surprised that Ronald should fall in love with Sybil, though he almost wished the choice could have fallen upon some one else, and accordingly he did everything in his power to make life in Newport agreeable for the young Englishman. It was convenient in some respects that the wooing should take place at so central a resort; but had the case been different, Vancouver would not have hesitated to go to Saratoga, Lennox, or Mount Desert, in the prosecution of his immediate purpose, which was to help Ronald to marry any living woman rather than let him return to England a bachelor.

When Ronald should be married, Joe would be in possession of three-quarters of her uncle's money—a very considerable fortune. If she

was human, thought Vancouver, she would be eternally grateful to him for ridding her of her cousin, whom she evidently did not wish to marry, and for helping her thereby to so much wealth. He reflected that he had been unfortunate in the time when he had decided to be a candidate for her hand; but whatever turn affairs took, no harm was done to his own prospects by removing Ronald from the list of possible rivals. He was delighted at the preference Surbiton showed for Sybil Brandon, and in case Ronald hesitated, he reserved the knowledge he possessed of her private fortune as a final stimulus to his flagging affections. Hitherto it had not seemed necessary to acquaint his friend with the fact that Sybil had an income of some thirty thousand dollars yearly—indeed, no one seemed to know it, and she was supposed to be in rather straitened circumstances.

As for his own chances with Joe, he had carefully hidden the tracks of his journalistic doings in the way he had at once proposed to himself when Joe attacked him on the subject. A gentleman had been found upon whom he

had fastened the authorship of the articles in the public estimation, and the gentleman would live and die with the reputation for writing he had thus unexpectedly obtained. He had ascertained beyond a doubt that Joe knew nothing of his interview with Ballymolloy, and he felt himself in a strong position.

Pocock Vancouver had for years taken an infinite amount of pains in planning and furthering his matrimonial schemes. He was fond of money; but in a slightly less degree he was fond of all that is beautiful and intelligent in woman; so that his efforts to obtain for himself what he considered a perfect combination of wit, good looks, and money, although ineffectual, had occupied a great deal of his spare time very agreeably.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHERWOOD was a very old place. It had been built a hundred years at least before the revolution, in the days when the States had English governors, and when its founder had been governor of Rhode Island. His last descendant in the direct line was Sybil Brandon's great-uncle.

The old country-seat was remarkable chiefly for the extent of the gardens attached to the house, and for the singularly advanced state of dilapidation in which everything was allowed to remain. Beyond the gardens the woods stretched down to the sea, unpruned and thick with a heavy undergrowth; from the road the gardens were hidden by thick hedges, and by the forbidding grey front of the building. It was not an attractive place to look at, and once

within the precincts there was a heavy sense of loneliness and utter desolation, that seemed to fit it for the very home of melancholy.

The damp sea air had drawn green streaks of mould downwards from each several jointing of the stones; the long closed shutters of some of the windows were more than half hidden by creepers, bushy and straggling by turns, and the eaves were all green with moss and mould. From the deep-arched porch at the back a weed-grown gravel walk led away through untrimmed hedges of box and myrtle to an ancient summer-house on the edge of a steep slope of grass. To right and left of this path the rose-trees and box that had once marked the gayest of flower gardens, now grew in such exuberance of wild profusion that it would have needed strong arms and a sharp axe to cut a way through. Far away on a wooded knoll above the sea was the old graveyard, where generations of Sherwoods lay dead in their quiet rest, side by side.

But for a space in every year the desolation was touched with the breath of life, and the sweet June air blew away the mould and the

smell of death, and the wild flowers and roses sprang up joyfully in the wilderness to greet the song-birds and the butterflies of summer. And in this copious year a double spring had come to Sherwood, for Sybil Brandon had arrived one day, and her soft eyes and golden hair had banished all sadness and shadow from the old place. Even the thin old man, who lived there among the ghosts and shadows of the dead and dying past, smoothed the wrinkles from his forehead, forgetting to long selfishly for his own death, when Sybil came; and with touching thoughtfulness he strove to amuse her, and to be younger for her sake. He found old garments of a gayer time, full thirty years hidden away in the great wardrobes up-stairs, and he put them on and wore them, though they hung loosely about his shaken and withered frame, lest he should be too sad a thing for such young eyes to look upon.

Then Ronald came one day, and the old man took kindly to him, and bid him come often. In the innocence of his old age it seemed good that what youth and life there was in the

world should come together; and Ronald treated him with a deference and respect to which he had long been unused. Moreover, Ronald accepted the invitation given him and came as often as he pleased, which, before long, meant every day. When he came in the morning he generally stayed until the evening, and when he came in the afternoon he always stayed as long as Sybil would let him, and rode home late through the misty June moonlight pondering on the happiness the world had suddenly brought forth for him who had supposed, but a few months ago, that all happiness was at an end.

Six months had gone by since Ronald had first seen Sybil, and he had changed in that time from boy to man. Looking back through the past years he knew that he was glad Joe had not married him, for the new purpose of his new life was to love and marry Sybil Brandon. There was no doubt in his mind as to what he would do; the strong nature in him was at last roused, and he was capable of anything in reason or without it to get what he wanted.

Some one has said that an Englishman's idea of happiness is to find something he can kill and to hunt it. That is a metaphor as well as a fact. It may take an Englishman half a lifetime to find out what he wants, but when he is once decided he is very likely to get it or to die in the attempt. The American is fond of trying everything until he reaches the age at which Americans normally become dyspeptic, and during his comparatively brief career he succeeds in experiencing a surprising variety of sensations. Both Americans and English are tenacious in their different ways, and it is certain that between them they have gotten more things that they have wanted than any other existing nation.

What most surprised Ronald was that, having fully made up his mind to marry Sybil, he should not yet have had the opportunity, or perhaps the courage, to tell her so. He remembered how easily he had always been able to speak to Joe about matrimony, and he wondered why it should be so hard to approach the subject with one whom he loved infinitely more dearly than he had ever loved his cousin. But

love brings tact and the knowledge of fitness, besides having the effect of partially hiding the past and exaggerating the future into an eternity of rose-coloured happiness; wherefore Ronald supposed that everything would come right in time, and that the time for everything to come right could not possibly be very far off.

On the day after he had seen Joe in Boston he rode over to Sherwood in the morning, as usual, upon one of Vancouver's horses. He was lighter at heart than ever, for he had somewhat dreaded the revelation of his intentions to Joe; but she had so led him on and helped him that it had all seemed very easy. He was not long in reaching his destination, and having put his horse in the hands of the single man who did duty as gardener, groom, and dairyman for old Mr. Sherwood, he entered the garden, where he hoped to find Sybil alone. He was not disappointed, for as he walked down the path through the wilderness of shrubbery he caught sight of her near the summer-house, stooping down in the act of plucking certain flowers that grew there.

She, too, was dressed all in white, as he had

seen his cousin on the previous day; but the difference struck him forcibly as he came up and took her outstretched hand. They had changed places and character, one could almost have thought. Joe had looked so tired and weary, so "wilted," as they say in Boston, that it had shocked Ronald to see her. Sybil, who had formerly been so pale and cold, now was the very incarnation of life; delicate and exquisitely fine in every movement and expression, but most thoroughly alive. The fresh soft colour seemed to float beneath the transparent skin, and her deep eyes were full of light and laughter and sunshine. Ronald's heart leaped in his breast for love and pride as she greeted him, and his brow turned hot and his hands cold in the confusion of his happiness.

"You have been away again?" she asked presently, looking down at the wild white lilies which she had been gathering.

"Yes, I was in Boston yesterday," answered Ronald, who had immediately begun to help in plucking the flowers. "I went to see Joe. She looks dreadfully knocked up with the heat, poor child."

And so they talked about Joe and Boston for a little while, and Sybil sat upon the steps of the summer-house on the side where there was shade from the hot morning sun, while Ronald brought her handfuls of the white lilies. At last there were enough, and he came and stood before her. She was so radiantly lovely as she sat in the warm shade with the still slanting sunlight just falling over her white dress, he thought her so superhumanly beautiful that he stood watching her without thinking of speaking or caring that she should speak to him. She looked up and smiled, a quick bright smile, for she was woman enough to know his thoughts. But she busied herself with the lilies and looked down again.

"Let me help you," said Ronald suddenly, kneeling down before her on the path.

"I don't think you can—very much," said Sybil, demurely. "You are not very clever about flowers, you know. Oh, take care! You will crush it—give it back to me!"

Ronald had taken one of the lilies and was smelling it, but it looked to Sybil very much as though he were pressing it to his lips. He

would not give it back, but held it away at arm's length as he knelt. Sybil made as thoug she were annoyed.

"Of course," said she, "I cannot take it, if you will not give it to me." Ronald gently laid the flower in her lap with the others. She pretended to take no notice of what he did, but went on composing her nosegay.

"Miss Brandon—" began Ronald, and stopped.

"Well?" said Sybil, without looking up.

"May I tell you something?" he asked.

"That depends," said Sybil. "Is it anything very interesting?"

"Yes," said Ronald. There seemed to be something the matter with his throat all at once, as though he were going to choke. Sybil looked up and saw that he was very pale. She had never seen him otherwise than ruddy before, and she was startled; she dropped the lilies on her knees and looked at him anxiously. Ronald suddenly laid his hands over hers and held them. Still she faced him.

"I am very unworthy of you—I know I am —but I love you very, very much." He spoke

distinctly enough now, and slowly. He was as white as marble, and his fingers were cold, and trembled as they held hers.

For an instant after he had spoken, Sybil did not move. Then she quietly drew back her hands and hid her face in a sudden, convulsive movement. She, too, trembled, and her heart beat as though it would break; but she said nothing. Ronald sprang from the ground and kneeled again upon the step beside her; very gently his arm stole about her and drew her to him. She took one hand from her face and tried to disentangle his hold, but he held her strongly, and whispered in her ear,

"Sybil, I love you—do you love me?"

Sybil made a struggle to rise, but it was not a very brave struggle, and in another moment she had fallen into his arms and was sobbing out her whole love passionately.

"Oh, Ronald, you mu—must not!" But Ronald did.

Half-an-hour later they were still sitting side by side on the steps, but the storm of uncertainty was passed, and they had plighted their faith for better and for worse, for this

world and the next. Ronald had foreseen the event, and had hoped for it as he never had hoped for anything in his life; Sybil had perhaps guessed it; at all events, now that the supreme moment was over, they both felt that it was the natural climax to all that had happened during the spring.

"I think," said Sybil, quietly, "that we ought to tell my uncle at once. He is the only relation I have in the world."

"Oh, yes, of course," said Ronald, holding her hand. "That is, you know, I think we might tell him after lunch. Because I suppose it would not be the right thing for me to stay all day after he knows. Would it?"

"Why not?" asked Sybil. "He must know it soon, and you will come to-morrow."

"To-morrow, and the next day, and the day after that, and always," said Ronald, lovingly. "But he will not like it, I suppose."

"Why not?" asked Sybil, again.

"Because I am poor," said Ronald, quietly. "You know I am not rich at all, Sybil dearest. We shall have to be very economical, and live

on the place in Scotland. But it is a very pretty place," he added, reassuringly.

Sybil flushed a little. He did not know, then, that she had a fortune of her own. It was a new pleasure. She did not say anything for a moment.

"Do you mind very much, dearest?" asked Ronald, doubtfully. "Do you think it would bore you dreadfully to live in the country?"

Sybil hesitated before she answered. She hardly knew whether to tell him or not, but at last she decided it would be better.

"No, Ronald," said she, smiling a little; "I like the country. But, you know, we can live anywhere we please. I am rich, Ronald—you did not know it?"

Ronald started slightly. It was indeed an unexpected revelation.

"Really?" he cried. "Oh, I am so glad for you. You will not miss anything, then. I was so afraid."

That evening Ronald telegraphed to Joe the news of his engagement, and the next day he wrote her a long letter, which was more remarkable for the redundant passion expressed than

for the literary merit of the expression. It seemed far easier to write it since he had seen her and talked with her about Sybil, not because he felt in the least ashamed of having fallen in love within six months of the dissolution of his former engagement with Joe, but because it seemed a terrible difficult thing to speak to any one about Sybil. Ronald was very far from being poetical, or in any way given to lofty and mediæval reflections of the chivalric sort, but he was a very honest fellow, loving for the first time, and he understood that his love was something more to be guarded and respected than anything that had yet come into his life; wherefore it seemed almost ungentlemanly to speak about it.

When Joe received the intelligence her satisfaction knew no bounds, for although she had guessed that the climax of the affair was not far off, she had not expected it so very soon. Had she searched through the whole of her acquaintance at home and in America she could have found no one whom she considered more fit to be Ronald's wife, and that alone was enough to make her very happy;

but the sensation of freedom from all further responsibility to Ronald, and the consciousness that every possible good result had followed upon her action, added so much to her pleasure in the matter, that for a time she utterly forgot herself and her own troubles. She instantly wrote a long and sympathetic letter to Ronald, and another to Sybil. Sybil replied at once, begging Joe to come and spend a month at Sherwood, or as much time as she was able to give.

"I expect you had best go," remarked Miss Schenectady. "It is getting pretty hot here, and you look quite sick."

"Oh no, I am very well," said Joe; "but I think I will go for a week or ten days."

"Well, if you find you are going to have a good time, you can always stay, anyway," replied the old lady. "I think if I were you I would take some books and a bible and a pair of old boots."

Miss Schenectady did not smile, but Joe laughed outright.

"A bible and a pair of old boots!" she cried.

"Yes, I would," said her aunt. "Old Tom

Sherwood cannot have seen a bible for fifty years, I expect, and it might sort of freshen him up." The old lady's eye twinkled slightly and the corners of her mouth twitched a little. "As for the old boots, if you conclude to go, you will want them, for you will be right out in the country there."

Joe laughed again, but she took her aunt's advice; and on the following day she reached Newport, and was met by Sybil and Ronald, who conveyed her to Sherwood in a thing which Joe learned was called a "carryall."

Late in the afternoon, when Ronald was gone, the two girls sat in an angle of the old walls, looking over the sea to eastward. The glow of the setting sun behind them touched them softly, and threw a rosy colour upon Joe's pale face, and gilded Sybil's bright hair, hovering about her brows in a halo of radiant glory. Joe looked at her and wondered at the change love had wrought in such short time. Sybil had once seemed so cold and white that only a nun's veil could be a fit thing to bind upon her saintly head; but now the orange blossoms would look better there, Joe thought, twined in a bride's

wreath of white and green, of purity and hope.

"My Snow Angel," she exclaimed, "the sun has melted you at last!"

"Tell me the story of the Snow Angel," said Sybil, smiling. "You once said that you would."

"I will tell you," said Joe, "as well as I can remember it. Mamma used to tell it to me years and years ago, when I was quite a small thing. It is a pretty story. Listen.

"Once on a time, far away in the north, there lived an angel. She was very, very beautiful, and all of the purest snow, quite white, her face and her hands and her dress and her wings. She lived alone, ever so far away, all through the long winter, in a valley of beautiful snow, where the sun never shone even in the summer. She was the most lovely angel that ever was, but she was so cold that she could not fly at all, and so she waited in the valley, always looking southward and wishing with all her heart that the sun would rise above the hill.

"Sometimes people passed, far down below,

in sledges, and she almost would have asked some one of them to take her out of the valley. But once, when she came near the track, a man came by and saw her, and he was so dreadfully frightened that he almost fell out of the sled.

"Sometimes, too, the little angels, who were young and curious, would fly down into the cold valley and look at her and speak to her.

"'Pretty angel,' they would say, 'why do you stay all alone in this dreary place?'

"'They forgot me here,' she used to answer, 'and now I cannot fly until the sun is over the hill. But I am very happy. It will soon come.'

"It was too cold for the little angels, and so they soon flew away and left her; and they began to call her the Snow Angel among themselves, and some of them said she was not real, but the other ones said she must be, because she was so beautiful. She was not unhappy, because angels never can be, you know; only it seemed a long time to wait for the sun to come.

"But at last the sun heard of her, and the

little angels who had seen her told him it was a shame that he should not rise high enough to warm her and help her to fly. So, as he is big and good-natured and strong, he said he would try, and would do his best; and on midsummer's day he determined to make a great effort. He shook himself and pushed and struggled very hard, and got hotter than he had ever been in his whole life with his exertions, but at last, with a great brave leap, he found himself so high that he could see right down into the valley, and he saw the Snow Angel standing there, and she was so beautiful that he almost cried with joy. And then, as he looked, he saw a very wonderful sight.

"The Snow Angel, all white and glistening, looked up into the sun's face and stretched her arms towards him and trembled all over; and as she felt that he was come at last and had begun to warm her, she thrust out her delicate long wings, and they gleamed and shone and struck the cold clear air. Then the least possible tinge of exquisite colour came into her face, and she opened her lips and sang for joy; and presently, as she was singing, she rose

straight upward with a rushing sound, like a lark in the sunlight, the whitest and purest and most beautiful angel that ever flew in the sky. And her voice was so grand and clear and ringing, that all the other angels stopped in their songs to listen, and then sang with her in joy because the Snow Angel was free at last.

"That is the story mamma used to tell me, long ago, and when I first saw you I thought of it, because you were so cold and beautiful that you seemed all made of snow. But now the sun is over the hill, Sybil dear, is it not?"

"Dear Joe," said Sybil, winding her arm round her friend's neck and laying her face close to hers, "you are so nice."

The sun sank suddenly behind them, and all the eastern water caught the purple glow. It was dark when the two girls walked slowly back to the old house.

Joe stayed many days with Sybil at Sherwood, and the days ran into weeks and the weeks to months as the summer sped by. Ronald came and went daily, spending long hours with Sybil in the garden, and growing more manly and quiet in his happiness, while

Sybil grew ever fairer in the gradual perfecting of her beauty. It was comforting to Joe to see them together, knowing what honest hearts they were. She occupied herself as she could with books and a few letters, but she would often sit for hours in a deep chair under the overhanging porch, where the untrimmed honeysuckle waved in the summer breeze like a living curtain, and the birds would come and swing themselves upon its tendrils. But Joe's cheek was always pale, and her heart weary with longing and with fighting against the poor imprisoned love that no one must ever guess.

CHAPTER IX.

THE wedding-day was fixed for the middle of August, and the ceremony was to take place in Newport. It is not an easy matter to arrange the marriage of two young people neither of whom have father nor mother, though their subsequent happiness is not likely to suffer much by the bereavement. It was agreed, however, that Mrs. Wyndham, who was Sybil's oldest friend, should come and stay at Sherwood until everything was finished; and she answered the invitation by saying she was "perfectly wild to come"—and she came at once. Uncle Tom Sherwood was a little confused at the notion of having his house full of people; but Sybil had been amusing herself by re-organising the place for some time back, and there is nothing easier than to render a great

old-fashioned country mansion habitable for a few days in the summer, when carpets are useless and smoking chimneys are not a necessity.

Mrs. Wyndham said that Sam would come down for the wedding and stay over the day, but that she expected he was pretty busy just now.

"By the way," she remarked, "you know John Harrington has come home. We must send him an invitation."

The three ladies were walking in the garden after breakfast, hatless and armed with parasols. Joe started slightly, but no one noticed it.

"When did he come—where has he been all this time?" asked Sybil.

"Oh, I do not know. He came down to see Sam the other day at our place. He seems to have taken to business. They talked about the Munroe doctrine and the Panama canal, and all kinds of things. Sam says somebody has died and left him money. Anyway, he seems a good deal interested in the canal."

Mrs. Wyndham chatted on, planning with

Sybil the details of the wedding. The breakfast was to be at Sherwood, and there were not to be many people. Indeed, the distance would keep many away, a fact for which no one of those principally concerned was at all sorry. John Harrington, sweltering in the heat of New York, and busier than he had ever been in his life, received an engraved card to the effect that Mr. Thomas Sherwood requested the pleasure of Mr. Harrington's company at the marriage of his grandniece, Miss Sybil Brandon, to Mr. Ronald Surbiton, at Sherwood, on the 15th of August. There was also a note from Mrs. Wyndham, saying that she was staying at Sherwood, and that she hoped John would be able to come.

John had, of course, heard of the engagement, but he had not suspected that the wedding would take place so soon. In spite of his business, however, he determined to be present. A great change had come over his life since he had bid Joe good-bye six months earlier. He had been called to London as he had expected, and had arrived there to find that Z was dead, and that he was to take his

place in the council. The fiery old man had died very suddenly, having worked almost to his last hour, in spite of desperate illness; but when it was suspected that his case was hopeless, John Harrington was warned that he must be ready to join the survivors at once.

In the great excitement, and amidst the constant labour of his new position, the past seemed to sink away to utter insignificance. His previous exertions, the short sharp struggle for the senatorship ending in defeat, the hopes and fears of ten years of a most active life, were forgotten and despised in the realisation of what he had so long and so ardently desired, and now at last he saw that his dreams were no impossibility, and that his theories were not myths. But he knew also that, with all his strength and devotion and energy, he was as yet no match for the two men with whom he had to do. Their vast experience of men and things threw his own knowledge into the shade, and cool as he was in emergencies, he recognized that the magnitude of the matters they handled astonished and even startled him more than he could have believed possible. Years must

elapse before he understood what seemed as plain as the day to them, and he must fight many desperate battles before he was their equal. But the determination to devote his life wholly and honestly to the one object for which a man should live, had grown stronger than ever. In his exalted view the ideal republic assumed grand and noble proportions, and already overshadowed the whole earth with the glory of honour and peace and perfect justice. Before the advancing tide of a spotless civilisation, all poverty, all corruption and filthiness, all crime, all war and corroding seeds of discord were swept utterly away and washed from the world, to leave only for ever and ever the magnificent harmony of nations and peoples, wherein none of those vile, base, and wicked things should even be dreamed of, or so much as remembered.

He thought of Joe sometimes, wondering rather vaguely why she had acted as she had, and whether any other motive than pure sympathy with his work had made her resent so violently Vancouver's position towards him. It was odd, he thought, that an English girl

should find such extreme interest in American political doings, and then the scene in the dim sitting-room during the ball came vividly back to his memory. It was not in his nature to fancy that every woman who was taken with a fit of coughing was in love with him, but the conviction formed itself in his mind that he might possibly have fallen in love with Joe if things had been different. As it was, he had put away such childish things, and meant to live out his years of work, with their failure or success, without love and without a wife. He would always be grateful to Joe, but that would be all, and he would be glad to see her whenever an opportunity offered, just as he would be glad to see any other friend. In this frame of mind he arrived in Newport on the morning of the wedding, and reached the little church among the trees just in time to witness the ceremony.

It was not different from other weddings, excepting perhaps that the place where the High Church portion of Newport elects to worship is probably smaller than any other consecrated building in the world. Every seat

was crowded, and it was with difficulty that John could find standing room just within the door. The heat was intense, and the horses that stood waiting in the avenue, sweated in the sun as they fought the flies, and pawed the hard road in an agony of impatience.

Sybil was exquisitely lovely as she went by on old Mr. Sherwood's arm. The old gentleman had consented to assume a civilised garb for once in his life, and looked pleased with his aged self, as well he might be, seeing that the engagement had been made under his roof. Then Ronald passed, paler than usual, but certainly the handsomest man present, carrying himself with a new dignity, as though he knew himself a better man than ever in being found worthy of his beautiful bride. It was soon over, and the crowd streamed out after the bride and bridegroom.

"Hallo, Harrington, how are you?" said Vancouver, overtaking John as he turned into the road. "You had better get in with me and drive out. I have not seen you for an age."

John stood still and surveyed Vancouver

with a curiously calm air of absolute superiority.

"Thank you very much," he answered civilly. "I have hired a carriage to take me there. I dare say we shall meet. Good morning."

John had been to Sherwood some years before, but he was surprised at the change that had been wrought in honour of the marriage. The place looked inhabited, the windows were all open, and the paths had been weeded, though Sybil had not allowed the wild shrubbery to be pruned nor the box hedges to be trimmed. She loved the pathless confusion of the old grounds, and most of all she loved the dilapidated summer-house.

John shook hands with many people that he knew. Mrs. Wyndham led him aside a little way.

"Is it not just perfectly splendid?" she exclaimed. "They are so exactly suited to each other. I feel as if I had done it all. You are not at all enthusiastic."

"On the contrary," said John, "I am very enthusiastic. It is the best thing that could possibly have happened."

"Then go and do likewise," returned Mrs. Sam, laughing. Then she changed her tone. "There is a young lady here who will be very glad to see you. Go and try and cheer her up a little, can't you?"

"Who is that?"

"A young lady over there—close to Sybil—dressed in white with roses. Don't you see? How stupid you are! There—the second on the left."

"Do you mean to say that is Miss Thorn?" exclaimed John in much surprise, and looking where Mrs. Sam directed him. "Good Heavens! How she has changed!"

"Yes, she has changed a good deal," said Mrs. Wyndham, looking at John's face.

"I hardly think I should have known her," said John. "She must have been very ill; what has been the matter?"

"The matter? Well, perhaps if you will go and speak to her, you will see what the matter is," answered Mrs. Sam, enigmatically.

"What do you mean?" John looked at his companion in astonishment.

"I mean just exactly what I say. Go and

talk to her, and cheer her up a little." She dropped her voice, and spoke close to Harrington's ear—"No one else in the world can," she added.

John's impulse was to answer Mrs. Wyndham sharply. What possible right could she have to say such things? It was extremely bad taste, if it was nothing worse, even with an old friend like John. But he checked the words on his lips and spoke coldly.

"It is not fair to say things like that about any girl," he answered. "I will certainly go and speak to her at once, and if you will be good enough to watch, you will see that I am the most indifferent of persons in her eyes."

"Very well, I will watch," said Mrs. Wyndham, not in the least disconcerted. "Only take care."

John smiled quietly, and made his way through the crowd of gaily-dressed, laughing people, to where Joe was standing. She had not yet caught sight of him, but she knew he was in the room, and she felt very nervous. She intended to treat him with friendly coolness, as a protest against her conduct in former days.

Poor Joe ! she was very miserable, but she had made a brave effort. Her pale cheeks and darkened eyes contrasted painfully with the roses she wore, and her short nervous remarks to those who spoke to her sounded very unlike her former self.

"How do you do, Miss Thorn?" John said, very quietly. "It is a long time since we met."

Joe put her small cold hand in his, and it trembled so much that John noticed it. She turned her head a little away from him, frightened now that he was at last come.

"Yes," she said in low voice, "it is a long time." She felt herself turn red and then pale, and as she looked away from John she met Mrs. Wyndham's black eyes turned full upon her in an inquiring way. She started as though she had been caught in some wrong thing; but she was naturally brave, and after the first shock she spoke to John more naturally.

"We seem destined for festivities, Mr. Harrington," she said, trying to laugh. "We parted at a ball, and we meet again at a wedding."

"It is always more gay to meet than to

part," answered John. "I think this is altogether one of the gayest things I ever saw. What a splendid fellow your cousin is. It does one good to see men like that."

"Yes, Ronald is very good-looking," said Joe. "I am so very glad, you do not know, and he is so happy."

"Any man ought to be who marries such a woman," said John. "By the bye," he added with a smile, "Vancouver takes it all very comfortably, does he not? I would like to know what he really feels."

"I am sure that whatever it is, it is something bad," said Joe.

"How you hate him!" exclaimed John with a laugh.

"I—I do not hate him. But you ought to, Mr. Harrington. I simply despise him, that is all."

"No, I do not hate him either," answered John. "I would not disturb my peace of mind for the sake of hating any one. It is not worth while."

Some one came and spoke to Joe, and John moved away in the crowd, more disturbed in

mind than he cared to acknowledge. He had gone to Joe's side in the firm conviction that Mrs. Wyndham was only making an untimely jest, and that Joe would greet him indifferently. Instead she had blushed, turned paler, hesitated in her speech, and had shown every sign of confusion and embarrassment. He knew that Mrs. Wyndham was right after all, and he avoided her, not wishing to give a fresh opportunity for making remarks upon Joe's manner.

The breakfast progressed, and the people wandered out into the garden from the hot rooms, seeking some coolness in the shady walks. By some chain of circumstances which John could not explain, he found himself left alone with Joe an hour after he had first met her in the house. A little knot of acquaintances had gone out to the end of one of the walks where there was a shady old bower, and presently they had paired off and moved away in various directions, leaving John and Joe together. The excitement had brought the faint colour to the girl's face at last, and she was more than usually inclined to talk, partly

from nervous embarrassment, and partly from the enlivening effect of so many faces she had not seen for so long.

"Tell me," she said, pulling a leaf from the creepers and twisting it in her fingers—"tell me, how long was it before you forgot your disappointment about the election? Or did you think it was not worth while to disturb your peace of mind for anything so trivial?"

"I suppose I could not help it," said John. "I was dreadfully depressed at first. I told you so, do you remember?"

"Of course you were, and I was very sorry for you. I told you you would lose it, long before, but you do not seem to care in the least now. I do not understand you at all."

"I soon got over it," said John. "I left Boston on the day after I saw you, and went straight to London. And then I found that a friend of mine was dead, and I had so much to do that I forgot everything that had gone before."

Joe gave a little sigh, short and sharp, and quickly checked.

"You have a great many friends, have you not?" she said.

"Yes, very many. A man cannot have too many of the right sort."

"I do not think you and I mean the same thing by friendship," said Joe. "*I* should say one cannot have too few."

"I mean friends who will help you at the right moment, that is, when you ask help. Surely it must be good to have many."

"Everything that you do and say always turns to one and the same end," said Joe, a little impatiently. "The one thing you live for is power and the hope of power. Is there nothing in the world worth while save that?"

"Power itself is worth nothing. It is the thing one means to get with it that is the real test."

"Of course. But tell me, is anything you can obtain by all the power the world holds better than the simple happiness of natural people, who are born and live good lives, and—fall in love, and marry, and that sort of thing, and are happy, and die?" Joe looked down

and turned the leaf she held in her fingers, as she stated her proposition.

John Harrington paused before he answered. A moment earlier he had been as calm and cold as he was wont to be; now, he suddenly hesitated. The strong blood rushed to his brain and beat furiously in his temples, and then sank heavily back to his heart, leaving his face very pale. His fingers wrung each other fiercely for a moment. He looked away at the trees; he turned to Josephine Thorn; and then once more he gazed at the dark foliage, motionless in the hot air of the summer's afternoon.

"Yes," he said, "I think there are things much better than those in the world." But his voice shook strangely, and there was no true ring in it.

Joe sighed again.

In the distance she could see Ronald and Sybil, as they stood under the porch shaking hands with the departing guests. She looked at them, so radiant and beautiful with the fulfilled joy of a perfect love, and she looked at the stern, strong man by her side, whose com-

manding face bore already the lines of care and trouble, and who, he said, had found something better than the happiness of yonder bride and bridegroom.

She sighed, and she said in her woman's heart that they were right, and that John Harrington was wrong.

"Come," she said, rising, and her words had a bitter tone, "let us go in; it is late."

John did not move. He sat like a stone, paler than death, and said no word in answer. Joe turned and looked at him, as though wondering why he did not follow her. She was terrified at the expression in his face.

"Are you not coming?" she asked, suddenly going close to him and looking into his eyes.

CHAPTER X.

JOE was frightened; she stood and looked into Harrington's eyes, doubting what she should do, not understanding what was occurring. He looked so pale and strange as he sat there, that she was terrified. She came a step nearer to him, and tried to speak.

"What is the matter, Mr. Harrington?" she stammered. "Speak—you frighten me!"

Harrington looked at her for one moment more, and then, without speaking, buried his face in his hands. Joe clasped her hands to her side in a sudden pain; her heart beat as though it would break, and the scene swam round before her in the hot air. She tried to move another step towards the bench, and her strength almost failed her; she caught at the lattice of the old summer-house, still pressing

one hand to her breast. The rotten slabs of the wood-work cracked under her light weight. She breathed hard, and her face was as pale as the shadows on driven snow; in another moment she sank down upon the bench beside John, and sat there, staring vacantly out at the sunlight. Harrington felt her gentle presence close to him and at last looked up; every feature of his strong face seemed changed in the convulsive fight that rent his heart and soul to their very depths; the enormous strength of his cold and dominant nature rose with tremendous force to meet and quell the tempest of his passion, and could not; dark circles made heavy shadows under his deepset eyes, and his even lips, left colourless and white, were strained upon his clenched teeth.

"God help me—I love you."

That was all he said, but in his words the deep agony of a mortal struggle rang strangely —the knell of the old life and the birth-chime of the new. One by one, the words he had never thought to speak fell from his lips, distinctly; the oracle of the heart answered the great question of fate in its own way.

Josephine Thorn sat by his side, her hands lying idly in her lap, her thin white face pressing against the old brown lattice, while a spray of the sweet honeysuckle that climbed over the woodwork just touched her bright brown hair. As John spoke she tried to lift her head and struggled to put out her hand, but could not.

As the shadows steal at evening over the earth, softly closing the flowers and touching them to sleep, silently and lovingly, in the promise of a bright waking—so, as she sat there, her eyelids drooped and the light faded gently from her face, her lips parted a very little, and with a soft-breathed sigh she sank into unconsciousness.

John Harrington was in no state to be surprised or startled by anything that happened. He saw, indeed, that she had fainted, but with the unerring instinct of a great love he understood. With the tenderness of his strength he put one arm about her, and drew her to him till her fair head rested upon his shoulder, and he looked into her face.

In a few moments he had passed completely from the old life to a life which he had never

believed possible, but which had nevertheless been long present with him. He knew it and felt it, quickly realising that for the first time since he could remember he was wholly and perfectly happy. He was a man who had dreamed of all that is noble and great for man to do, who had consecrated his every hour and minute to the attainment of his end; and though his aim was in itself a good one, the undivided concentration which the pursuit of it required, had driven him into a state outwardly resembling extreme egotism. He had loved his own purposes as he had loved nothing else, and as he had been persuaded that he could love nothing else, in the whole world. Now, suddenly, he knew his own heart.

There is something beyond mere greatness, beyond the pursuit of even the highest worldly aims; there is something which is not a means to the attainment of happiness, which is happiness itself. It is an inner sympathy of hearts and souls and minds, a perfect union of all that is most worthy in the natures of man and woman; it is a plant so sensitive that a breath of unkindness will hurt it and blight its beauty,

and yet it is a tree so strong that neither time nor tempest can overthrow it when it has taken root; and if you would tear it out and destroy it, the place where it grew is as deep and as wide as a grave. It is a bond that is as soft as silk and as strong as death, binding hearts, not hands; so long as it is not strained a man will hardly know that he is bound, but if he would break it he will spend his strength in vain and suffer the pains of hell, for it is the very essence and nature of a true love that it cannot be broken.

With such men as John Harrington love at first sight is an utter impossibility. The strong dominant aspirations that lead them are a light too brilliant to be outshone by any sudden flash of hot passion. Love, when it comes to them, is of slow growth, but enduring in the same proportion as it is slow; identifying itself, by degrees so small that a man himself is unconscious of it, with the deepest feelings of the heart and the highest workings of the intellect. It steals silently into the soul in the guise of friendship, asking nothing but loyal friendship in return; in the appearance of kindness which

asks but a little gratitude; in the semblance of a calm and passionless trustfulness, demanding only a like trust as its equivalent pledge, a like faith as a gage for its own, an equal measure of charity for an equal; and so love builds himself a temple of faith and charity, and trust and kindness, and honest friendship, and rejoices exceedingly in the whole goodness and strength and beauty of the place where he will presently worship. When that day comes he stands in the midst and kindles a strong clear flame upon the altar, and the fire burns and leaps and illuminates the whole temple of love, which is indeed the holy of holies of the temple of life.

John Harrington, through five-and-thirty years of his life, had believed that the patient labour of a powerful intellect could suffice to a man, in its results, for the attainment of all that humanity most honours, even for the wise and unerring government of humanity itself. To that end and in that belief he had honestly given every energy he possessed, and had sternly choked down every tendency he felt in his inner nature toward a life less

intellectual and more full of sympathy for the affairs of individual mankind. With him to be strong was to be cold—to be warm was to be weak and subject to error; a supreme devotion to his career and a supreme disdain of all personal affections were the conditions of success which he deemed foremostly necessary, and he had come to an almost superstitious belief in the idea that the love of woman is the destruction of the intellectual man. Himself ready to sacrifice all he possessed, and to spend his last strength in the struggle for an ideal, he had nevertheless so identified his own person with the object he strove to attain that he regarded all the means he could possibly control with as much jealousy as though he had been the most selfish of men. Friends he looked upon as tools for his trade, and he valued them not only in proportion to their honesty and loyalty of heart, but also in the degree of their power and intelligence. He sought no friendships which could not help him, and relinquished none that could be of service in the future.

But the world is not ruled by intellect, though

it is sometimes governed by brute force and yet more brutal passions. The dominant power in the affairs of men is the heart. Humanity is moved far more by what it feels than by what it knows, and those who would be rulers of men must before all things be men themselves, and not merely highly finished intellectual machines.

The guests were gone, no one had missed Harrington and Joe, and Ronald and Sybil had gone into the house. They sat side by side in the little bower at the end of the long walk—Joe's fair head resting in her unconsciousness upon John's shoulder. Presently she stirred, and opening her eyes, looked up into his face. She drew gently away from him, and a warm blush spread quickly over her pale cheek; she glanced down at her small white hands and they clasped each other convulsively.

John looked at her; suddenly his gray eyes grew dark and deep, and the mighty passion took all his strength into its own, so that he trembled and turned pale again. But the words failed him no longer now. He knew in a moment all that he had to say, and he said it.

"You must not be angry with me, Miss

Thorn," he began, "you must not think I am losing my head. Let me tell you now—perhaps you will listen to me. God knows, I am not worthy to say such things to you, but I will try to be. It is soon said. I love you—I can no more help loving you than I can help breathing. You have utterly changed me, and saved me, and made a life for me out of what was not life at all. Do not think it is sudden—what is really to last for ever must take some time in growing. I never knew till to-day—I honoured you and would have done everything in the world for you, and I was more grateful to you than I ever was to any human being. But I thought when we met we should be friends just as we always were, and instead of that I know that this is the great day of my life, and that my life with all that it holds is yours now, for always, to do with as you will. Pray hear me out, do not be afraid; no man ever honoured you as I honour you."

Joe glanced quickly at him and then again looked down; but the surging blood came and went in her face, coursing madly in her pulses, every beat of her heart crying gladness.

"It is little enough I have to offer you," said John, his voice growing unsteady in the great effort to speak calmly. There was something almost terrible in the strength of his rising passion. "It is little enough—my poor life, with its wretched struggles after what is perhaps far too great for me. But such as it is I offer it to you. Take it if you will. Be my wife, and give me the right to do all I do for your sake, and for your sake only." He stretched out his hand and took hers, very gently, but the strained sinews of his wrist trembled violently. Josephine made no resistance, but she still looked down and said nothing.

"Use me as you will," he continued almost in a whisper. "I will be all to you that man ever was to a living woman. Do not say I have no right to ask you for as much. I have this right, that I love you beyond the love of other men, so truly and wholly I love you; I will serve you so faithfully, I will honour you so loyally that you will love me too. Say the word, my beloved, say that it is not impossible! I will wait—I will work—I will strive to be worthy of you." He pressed his white lips to

the south, and on opening the sealed documents in the presence of the two houses, it was found that no one of the three had obtained the majority necessary to elect him. The country was in a state of unparalleled agitation. The imminent danger was that the non-election of the candidate from the west would produce a secession of the western states from the Union, in the same way that a revolution was nearly brought about in 1876, during the contest between Mr. Hayes and Mr. Tilden.

In this position of affairs, the electors being unable to agree upon any one of the three candidates, the election was thrown into the hands of Congress, in accordance with the clause of the Constitution which provides that in such cases the House of Representatives shall elect a president, each state having but one vote.

Harrington had made many speeches in different parts of the country during the election campaign, and had attracted much attention by his calm good sense in such excited times. There was consequently a manifest desire among senators and representatives to hear him speak in the Capitol, and upon the day when the final

election of the president took place he judged that his opportunity had come. Josephine was in the ladies' gallery, and as John rose to his feet he looked long and fixedly up to her, gathering more strength to do well what he so much loved to do, from gazing at her whom he loved better than power, or fame, or any earthly thing. His eyes shone and his cheek paled; his old life with all its energy and active work was associated in his mind with failure, with discontent, and with solitude; his new life, with her by his side, was brilliant, happy, and successful. He felt within him the strength to move thousands, the faith in his cause and in his power to help it which culminates in great deeds. His strong voice rang out, clear and far-heard, as he spoke.

"MR. PRESIDENT,

"WE are here to decide on behalf of our country a great matter. Many of us, many more who are scattered over the land, will look back upon this day as one of the most important in our times, and for their sakes as well as our own we are bound to summon all our

strength of intelligence and all our calmness of judgment to aid us in our decision.

"The question in which a certain number of ourselves are to become arbitrators is briefly this: Are we to act on this occasion like partisans, straining every nerve for the advantage of our several parties? or are we to act like free men, exerting our united forces in one harmonious body for the immediate good of the whole country? The struggle may seem at first sight to be a battle between the east, the west, and the south. In sober earnest, it is a contest between the changing principles of party politics on the one hand and the undying principle of freedom on the other.

"I need not make any long statement of the case to you. We are here assembled to elect a president. Our position is almost unprecedented in the history of the country. Instead of acquiescing in the declared will of the people, our fellow-citizens, we are told that the people's wish is divided, and we are called upon to act spontaneously for the people, in accordance with the constitution of our country. By our individual and unhampered votes the life of

the country is to be determined for the next four years. Let us not forget the vast responsibility that is upon us. Let us join our hands and say to each other, 'We are no longer Republicans, nor Democrats, nor Independents —we are one party, the party of the Union, and there are none against us.'

"A partisan is not necessarily a man who asserts a truth and defends it with his whole strength. A partisan means one who takes up his position with a party. There is a limit where a partisan becomes an asserter of falsehood, and that limit is reached when a man resigns his own principles into the judgment of another, his conscience into another's keeping; when a man gives up free thought, free judgment, and free will in absolute and blind adherence to a set of thoughts, judgments, and decisions over which he exercises no control, and in the formation of which he has but one voice in many millions. Every one remembers the fable of the old man who, when dying, made his sons break their staves one by one, and then bid them bind a bundle of others together, and to try and break them by one

effort. In the uniting of individuals in a party there is strength, but there must also be complete unity. If the old man had bidden his sons bind their staves in several bundles instead of in one, the result would have been doubtful. That is what party spirit makes men do. Party spirit is a universal solvent; it is the great acid, the *aqua fortis* of political alchemy, which eats through bands of steel and corrodes pillars of iron in its acrid virulence, till the whole engine of a nation's government is crumbled and dissolved into a shapeless and a worse than useless mass of broken metal.

"Man is free, his will is free, his choice, his judgments, his capacity for thought, and his power to profit by it are all as free as air, just so long as he remembers that they are his own —no longer. When he forgets that he is his own master, absolutely and entirely, he becomes another man's slave.

"The contest here is between political passion roused to its fiercest pitch by the antagonism of parties, and the universal liberty of opinion, which we all say we possess, while so few of us dare honestly exercise it. This passion, this

political frenzy that seizes men and whirls them in its eddies, is a most singular compound of patriotism, of enthusiasm for an individual, and of the personal hopes, fears, generosity, and avarice of the individual who is enthusiastic. It is a passion which, existing in others, can be turned to account by the cool leader who does not possess it, but which may too easily bring ruin upon the man who is led.

"The danger ahead is this same party spirit, this wild and thoughtless frenzy in matters where unbiassed judgment is most of all necessary. It is a rock upon which we have split before; it has taken us many years to recover from the shock, and now we are in danger of altogether losing our political life upon the same reef. Unless we mend our course we inevitably shall. Men forego every consideration of public honour and private conscience for the sake of electing a party candidate. The man at the helm of the party ship has declared that he will sail due north, or south, or east, or west, whatever happens, and his crew laugh together and keep no look-out; they even feel a certain pride in their leader, who thus

defies the accidents of nature for the sake of sailing in a fixed direction.

"What is the result of all this? It is here before us. The country is splitting into parties. Three candidates are set up for the office of president. Three distinct parties stand in the field, each one vowing vengeance, secession, revolution, utter dismemberment of the Union, unless its chosen champion is elected to be chief of the Executive Department. Is this to be the life of our Republic in future? Is this all that so many millions of free citizens can do for the public good and for public harmony? What shall we gain by electing the candidate from the north, if the defeated candidate from the south is determined to produce a revolution; and if the disappointed candidate from the west threatens to touch off the dry powder and spring the mine of a great western secession? Have we not seen all this before? Has not the bitter cry of a nation's broken heart gone up to heaven already in mortal agony for these very things to which our uncontrollable political passions are hourly leading us?

"The contest is between political passion on

the one hand and universal liberty on the other.

"Liberty in some countries is a kind of charade word, an anagram, a symbol representing an imaginary quantity, a password invented by unhappy men to express all that they do not possess; a term meaning in the minds of slaves a conglomerate of conditions so absurd, of aspirations so futile, of imaginary delights so fantastically unreasonable, that if the ideal state of which the chained dreamers rave were realised but for one moment, humanity would start in amazement at the first glimpse of so much monstrosity, and by and by would hold its sides with laughter at the folly of its deluded fellows. In most countries where liberty is talked of it is but a dream, and such a dream as could only occur to the sickened fancy of a generation of bondsmen. But it means something else with us. It is here, in this country, in this capital, in this hall, it is in the air we breathe, in the light we see, in the strong, free pulses of our blood; it is the heritage of men whose sires died for it, whose fathers laid down all they had for it, of men whose own veins

have bled for it—and not in vain. In these United States liberty is a fact.

"We must decide quickly then, between the conditions of our liberty and the requirements of frantic political passion. We must decide between peace and war, for that is where the issue will come in the end. Between freedom, prosperity, and peace on the one side, and a civil war on the other; an alternative so horrible and inhuman and hideous, that the very mention of it makes brave men shiver in disgust at the memories the word recalls. Do you think we are much further from it now than we were in 1860? Do you think we were far from it in 1876? It is a short step from the threat to the deed when political passion is already turning to bitter personal hate.

"In our times there is much talk of civilisation and culture. Two words define all that is necessary to be known about them. Civilisation is peace. The uncivilised state of man is incessant war. Culture is conscience, because conscience means the exercise of honest judgment, and an ignorant people can form no honest judgment of their own which can be exercised.

"In a state of peace educated and truthful men judge fairly, and act sensibly on their decisions. In other words, the majority is right and free. In times of war and in times of great ignorance majorities have rarely been either free or right.

"It is a bad sign of the times when education increases and truth disappears. They ought to grow together, for education means absolutely nothing but the teaching and learning of what is true. If it does not mean that it means nothing. In some countries the idea of truth is co-existent with the idea of destroying all existing forms of belief. Some silly person recently went so far as to raise the cry in this country, 'Separate Church and State!' If there is a country where they are absolutely separated it is ours; but let the beliefs of mankind take care of themselves. I dare say there will be Christians left in the world even when Professor Huxley has written his last book, and when Colonel Ingersoll has delivered his last lecture. I am reminded of the Chinese philosopher and political economist, who answered when he was asked about religious matters:

'Do you understand this world so well that you need occupy yourselves with another?'

"The issue turns upon no such absurdities, neither does it rest with any consideration of so-called platforms—Free Trade, Civil Service, free navigation, tariff reform, and all the rest of those things. The real issue is between civilisation and barbarism, between peace and war.

"Be warned in this great strait. I believe we need few principles, but universal ones. I believe in the Republic because it was founded in simplicity, and has been built up in strength by the strongest of strong men; because its existence proves the greatest truth with which we ever have to do, namely, that men are born equal and free, although they may grow up slaves to their evil passions, and become greater or less according as they manfully put their hands to the plough, or ignobly lie down and let themselves be trampled upon. The battle of life is to the stronger, but no man is so weak that he cannot raise himself a little if he will, according to the abilities that are born in him; and nowhere can he raise himself so speedily and securely as on this free soil of ours. No-

where can he go so far without being molested; for nowhere can man put himself so closely and trustfully in the keeping of nature, certain that she will not fail him, certain that she will yield him a thousandfold for his labour.

"There are indeed times in the history of a great institution when it is just as well as necessary to reconsider the principles upon which it is founded. There are times in the life of a great nation when it behoves her chief men to examine and see whether the basis of her constitution is a sound one, and whether she can continue to grow great without any change in the fundamental conditions of her development. It is a bad and a dangerous time for a growing nation, but it is an almost inevitable stage in her life. Thank God that time is past with us! Let us not think of the possibility of exposing ourselves again to civil war as an alternative against retrogression into barbarism.

"Civilisation is peace, and to extend civilisation is to increase the security of property in the world—of property and life and conscience. The natural and barbarous state of man is that

where the human animal satisfies its cravings without any thought of consequences. The cultivated state is that where humanity has ceased to be merely animal, and considers the consequences first and the cravings afterwards. Civilisation unites men so that they dwell together in harmony; to separate them into parties that strive to annihilate each other is to undo the work of civilisation, to plunge the state into civil war; to hew it in pieces, and split it and tear it to shreds, till the magnificent body of thinking beings, acting as one man for the public good, is reduced to the miserable condition of a handful of hostile tribes, whose very existence depends upon successful robbery and well-timed violence.

"Party spirit, so long as it is only a force which binds together a number of men of honest purposes and opinions, is a good thing, and it is by its means that just and powerful majorities are formed and guided. But where party spirit loses sight of the characters of men, and judges them according as they are Republicans or Democrats, instead of considering whether they are good or bad citizens; when party spirit

becomes a machine for obtaining power by fair or foul means, instead of a fixed principle for upholding the fair against the foul—then there is great danger that the majority itself is losing its liberty, and upon the liberty of majorities depends ultimately the stability and prosperity of the republic.

"Consider what is the history of the average politician to-day, of the man whose personal character is as good as that of his neighbour, who has always belonged to the same party, and who looks forward to the hope of political distinction. Consider how he has struggled through all manner of difficulties to his present position, striving always to maintain good relations with the chiefs of his party, while often acknowledging in his heart that he would act differently were his connection with those chiefs a matter of less vital importance to himself. He probably will tell you that his profession is politics. He has sacrificed much to obtain his seat in Congress, or his position in office, and he knows that henceforth he must live by it or else begin life over again in another sphere. At all events, for a term of years, his

personal prosperity depends upon the use he can make of his hold upon the public goods. He is not individually to be blamed, perhaps, for he follows a precedent as widely recognised as it is universally pernicious. It is the system that is to be blamed, the general belief that a man can, and justly may, support himself by clinging to a set of principles of which he does not honestly approve; that he may earn his daily meal, since it comes to that in the end, by doing jobs which in the free state he would despise as unworthy, and by speaking boldly in support of measures which he knows to be injurious to the welfare of the country. That is the history, the epitome of the ends and aims and manner of being of the average politician in our day. He has ventured into the waters of political life, and they have risen around him till he must use all his strength in keeping his head above them, though the torrent carry him whither it will and whither he would not. There are no compromises when a man is drowning.

"There are many who are not in any such position. There are men great and honest,

and disinterested in the highest sense of the word—men whose whole lives prove it, whose whole record is one of honour and truth, whose following consists of men they have themselves chosen as their friends. We are not obliged to select a drowning man for our president; we can choose a man who stands on his own feet upon dry ground.

"There is an old proverb which contains much wisdom: 'Tell me who are your friends, and I will tell you what you are.' Is a man fit to stand at the head of a community of men when he has associated with a set of parasites, who live upon his leavings, and will starve him if they can, in order to enjoy his portion? Consider what is the position of the President of the United States. Think what vast power is placed in the hands of one man; what vast interests of public and private good are at stake; what an endless sequence of events and results of events must follow upon the individual action of the chief of the Executive Department; and remember how free and untrammelled that individual action is. A people who elect an officer to such a position

need surely to be cautious in their choice and circumspect in their judgment of the man elected. They must satisfy themselves about what he is likely to do by judging honestly what he has done; they must know who are his friends, his supporters, his advisers, in order to judge of the friends he will make. They must take into their consideration also the character of his colleague, the vice-president, and the effect upon the country and the country's relation with the world, should any disaster suddenly throw the vice-president into office. We cannot afford to elect a vice-president who would destroy the national credit in a week, should the president himself be overtaken by death. We must remember to count the cost of what we are doing, not passing over one item because another item seems just. We cannot overlook the future, nor disregard the influence which our election has upon the next; the steps which men, once in office, may take in order to secure to themselves another term, or to strengthen the position of the men whom they desire to succeed them.

"In a word, we must put forth all our

strength. We must be cool, far-sighted, and impartial in such times as these. And yet, how has this campaign been hitherto conducted? Practically, by raising a party cry; by exciting every species of evil passion of which man is capable; by tickling the cupidity of one man and flattering the ambitions of another; by intimidating the weak, and grovelling before the strong; by every species of fawning sycophancy on the one hand, and brutal overbearing bullying on the other.

"Party, party, party! A man would rather commit a crime than vote against his party. The evil runs through the country from east to west, from north to south, eating at the nation's heart-strings, gnawing at her sinews, and undermining her strength. The time is coming, is even now come, when two or three parties no longer suffice to express the disunion of the Union. There are three to-day: to-morrow there will be five, the next day ten, twenty, a hundred, till every man's hand is against his fellow, and his fellow's against him. The divisions have grown so wide that the majority and the minority are but the extremities of

a countless set of internecine majorities and minorities.

"Members of parties are bound no longer by the honest determination to do the right, to choose the right, and to uphold the right—they are bound by fearful penalties to support their own man, were he the very chiefest outcast of the earth, lest the man of another party be elected in his place. The adverse candidate is perhaps avowedly better fitted for the office, a hundred times more honest, more experienced, more worthy of respect. But he belongs to the enemy. Down with him! let him perish in his honesty and righteousness! There is no good in him, for he is a Democrat! There is no good in him, for he is a Republican! He is a scoundrel, for he is a Southerner! He is a thief, for he is a Northerner! He is the prince of liars, for he comes from the west! He is the scum of mankind, for he is from the east! The people rage and rend each other, and the frenzy grows apace with the hour, till honour and justice, truth and manliness, are lost together in the furious chaos of human elements. The tortured airs of heaven howl out

curses in a horrid unison, this fair free soil of ours, dishonoured and befouled, moans beneath our feet in a dismal drone of hopeless woe; there is no rock or cavern or ghostly den of our mighty land but hisses back the echo of some hideous curse, and hell itself is upon earth, split and rent into multiplied hells.

"And the ultimate expression of the senses of these things is money. There is the chiefest disgrace. We are not worse than the old nations, but we have a right to be very much better; we have the obligation to be better, the unchanging moral obligation which lies upon every man to use the advantage he has. We alone among nations are free, we alone among nations inhabit a quarter of the world by ourselves, and live and grow great in our own way with no thought of the rest. Let us think more of living greatly than of prosecuting greatness for the sake of its pecuniary emoluments. Let us elect presidents who will give their efforts to making us all great together, and not to making some citizens rich at the expense of others who are also citizens. A president can do much toward either of these results, bad or good. He has

the future of the Republic in his hands, as well as the present. Let us be the richest among nations, since the course of events makes us so, but let us not be the most sordid. Let it never be said, in the land which has given birth to the only true liberty the world has ever seen, that liberty can be sold for a few dollars in the market-place, and bartered against the promise of four years of civil employment at a small salary!

"This party spirit, this miserable craving for the good things that may be extracted from the service of a party, has produced the crying evil of our times. A certain class—a very large class—call our politics dirty, and our politicians dishonest. Young men whose education and position in the commonwealth entitle them to a voice in public matters withdraw entirely from all contact with the real life of the country. Liberty has become a leper, a blind outcast in the eyes of the gilded youth of to-day. She sits apart in ashes and in rags, and asks a little charity of the richest of her children—a miserable mother despised and cast out by her sons. They will not own her for their mother, nor spare one

crust to feed her from their plenty. They pass by on the other side, staring in admiration at the image they have set up for themselves—the image of what they consider social excellence, an idol compounded of decayed customs, and breathing the poisonous emanations of a dead world, a monument raised to the prejudices of former times, to the petty thirst for aristocratic distinctions which they cherish in their hearts, to their love of money, show, superficial culture, and armorial bearings.

"Truly let them perish in the fruition of their contemptible desires! Let them set up a thing called society and worship it; let them lose themselves in the contemplation of objects whose beauty they can never appreciate save by counting the cost; let them disgrace the names their honest fathers bore, by striving to establish their descent from houses stained with crime and defiled with blood; let them disown their fathers and spit in their mothers' faces,—but let them not call themselves free, nor give themselves the airs of men. They toss their foolish heads in scorn of all that a man holds truest and best. We can afford to let

them speak if they please, even words of contempt and dishonour; we can afford to let them say that in labouring for our country we are grovelling in mud and defiling our hands with impurity; but we cannot afford to let them steal our children from us, nor to submit to the pestilent influence of their corruption in our ranks. Those who would be of the Republic must labour for the public good, instead of insolently asserting that there is no good in the public on which they have fattened and thriven so well.

"All honour to those who have set their faces against the growing evil, to check it if they can, and to lay the foundation of a barrier against which the tidal wave of corruption and dishonesty shall break in vain. All praise to the brave men who might live in the indolent lotus-eating atmosphere of wasteful idleness, but who have put their hand to the wheel of state, determined to bear all their might upon the whirling spokes rather than see the good ship go to pieces on the rock ahead. They have begun a good work, and they have sown a good seed—they ask for no reward, nor look for the reaping of the harvest. They mean to

do right, and they do it, because right is right, not because they expect to be rewarded with the spoils or fed with fat tit-bits from the feast of party. Upon such men as these, be they rich or poor, we must rely. The poor man can make sacrifices as great as the rich, for he can forego for his country's sake the promise of ease and the hope of wealth as well as any million-maker in the land.

"In the tremendous issue now before us we are called to decide upon the life of the country during the next four years. We are chosen to direct the course of a stream from its very source, and to turn it into a channel where it will run smoothly to the end. For the four years of an administration are like a river. The water rises suddenly from the spring and flows swiftly, ever increasing in volume as it is swollen by tributaries and absorbs into itself other rivers by the way. It may run smoothly in a fair stream, moistening barren lands and softening the parched desert into fertility; moving great engines of industry with a ceaseless, even strength; bearing the burden of a mighty and prosperous commerce on its broad

bosom; spreading plenty and refreshment through the wide pastures by its banks, fed on its way by waters so clear that at the last it merges untainted and unsullied into the ocean, whence its limpid drops may again be taken up and poured in soft, life-giving rain upon the earth.

"But in digging for a spring men may find suddenly a torrent that they cannot control. It suddenly bursts its bounds and banks, and rushes headlong down, carrying everything before it in a resistless whirl of devastation, tearing great trees up by the roots, crashing through villages and towns and factories, girding the world with a liquid tempest that sends the works of man spinning down upon its dreadful course, till it plunges into the abyss' a frantic chaos of indiscriminate destruction, storm, and death.

"Can any of us here present say that he will, that he dare, take upon himself the responsibility of electing a president from motives of party prejudice? Having it in our power to agree upon the very best man, would any of us remember this day without shame if we disgraced those who trust us, by giving

our votes to a mere party candidate? The danger is great, imminent, universal. We can save the country from it, I would almost say from death itself, by acting in accordance with our honest convictions. Is any man so despicable, so lost to honour, that in such a case he will put aside the welfare of a nation for the miserable sake of party popularity? Are we to stand here in the guise and manner of free men, knowing that we are driven together like a flock of sheep into the fold by the howling of the wolves outside? Are we to strut and plume ourselves upon our unhampered freedom, while we act like slaves? Worse than slaves we should be if we allowed one breath of party spirit, one thought of party aggrandisement, to enter into the choice we are about to make. Slaves are driven to their work—shall we willingly let ourselves be beaten into doing the dirty work of others by sacrificing the nobility of our manhood? Do we meet here like paid gladiators of old, to cut each other's throats in earnest while attacking and defending a sham fortress, raised in the arena for the diversion of those who set us on to the butchery and promise

to pay the survivors? Are we to provide a feast of carrion for a flock of vultures and unclean beasts of prey, when we need only stand together, and be true to ourselves and to each other, to accomplish one of the greatest acts in history? The vultures will leave us alone unless we destroy each other; we need not fear them. We are not slaves to be terrified into compliance with evil, neither are we sheep that we need huddle trembling together at the snarling of a wolf."

"No, no, indeed!" were the words heard on all sides in the audience, now thoroughly roused.

"I do not say elect this candidate, or that one. I am not canvassing for any candidate. It is too late for that, even if it were seemly for me to do so. I am canvassing for the cause of liberty against slavery, as better men have done before me in this very house. I am defending the reputation of unity against the slanderous attack of disunion—against the fearful peril of secession. I appeal to you, as you are men, to act as men in this great crisis, to put out your strong hands together and avert the overwhelm-

ing disaster that threatens us; to stand side by side as brothers—for we are indeed brothers, children of one father and one mother, heirs of such magnificent heritage as has not fallen to the lot of mortality before, co-heirs of freedom, and inheritors of the free estate, five-and-fifty millions of free children, born to our mother, the great Republic, who bow the knee to no man, and call no man master."

Loud applause greeted this part of the speech.

"I appeal from licence to law from division to harmony, from the raging turmoil of angry and devouring passion without, to the calm serenity that reigns within these walls. As we turn in horror and loathing from the unbridled fury of human beings, changed almost to beasts, so let us turn in hope and security to those things we can honour and respect, to the dignity of truth and the unbending strength of unquestioned right.

"I appeal to you to make this day the greatest in your lives, the most memorable in our history as a nation. Lay aside this day the memories of the past, and look forward to the

brightness of the future. Throw down the weapons of petty and murderous strife, and join together in perfect harmony of mutual trust. Be neither Republicans, nor Democrats, nor Independents. Be what it is your greatest privilege to be—American citizens. Cast parties to the winds, and uphold the state. Trample under your free-born feet the badges of party bondage, the ignoble chains of party slavery, the wretched hopes of party preferment."

"Yes. Hear, hear! He is right!" cried many voices.

"Yes," answered John Harrington, in tones that rose to the very roof of the vast building.

> "'Yes, by that blood our fathers shed,
> O Union, in thy sacred cause,
> Whilst, streaming from the gallant dead,
> It sealed and sanctified thy laws.'

"Yes, and strong hearts and strong hands will hold their own; the promise of brave men will prevail, and echoing down the avenues of time, will strike grand chords of harmony in the lives of our children and children's children. So, in the far-off ages, when hundreds of millions of our flesh and blood shall fill this land, dwelling

together in the glory of such peace as no turmoil can trouble and no discontent disturb, those men of the dim future will remember what we swore to do, and what we did; and looking back, they will say one to another: 'On that day our fathers struck a mighty blow, and shattered and crushed and trampled out all dissensions and all party strife for ever and ever.'

"Choose, then, of your own heart and will a man to be our president and our leader. Elect him with one accord, and as you give your voices in the choice, stand here together, knee to knee, shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand; and let the mighty oath go thundering up to heaven,

'THIS UNION SHALL NOT BE BROKEN!'"

THE END.

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